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BARON DE MARBOT'S MEMOIRS

VOL. I.

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TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE

THIS English version of what is in some respects the most interesting book that has appeared in France—or for that matter in either country—for a generation must be taken for what it is, namely, an attempt to convey some of the interest of this work to English readers who do not read French fluently. Owing to circumstances not necessary to specify here, the work was entrusted to a translator whose principal qualifications were a fair knowledge of French, and just enough acquaintance with French military terms to be aware that *brigadier* does not mean a brigadier, nor *maréchal de camp* a field-marshal. Further, the different conditions of the book-market in England and France made it impossible to render the 1,200 and odd pages of the original in their entirety; and consequently the whole work, except the most exciting episodes, has had to be somewhat condensed, and several passages reduced to little more than abstracts. These last are indicated by brackets. The book has been less injured than some would be by this treatment—for 'style' was not General Marbot's forte. He tells his stories (and excellent stories they are) quite intelligibly, and with the most engaging good faith, but with a decided excess of relative clauses. On the other hand, it has been thought expe-

dient to preserve, as far as possible, the colloquial turns of phrase which abound, and give the recital much of its freshness. Whether it be that a good deal of the book was composed by the process of copying notes made at the moment, or that the author, as he wrote, identified himself with his former self to the point of adapting his diction to the period of his life which he happened to be recording, it is certainly noticeable that these colloquialisms are much less frequent in the later portions of the book. In fact, from the beginning of the Russian campaign and his own promotion to the command of a regiment, a curious accession of seriousness is to be remarked, and at last a tone of positive bitterness when the enemies of France are mentioned. No doubt the recollection of that time was enough to inspire seriousness, and even occasional bitterness, in the tone of any Frenchman who had taken part in its events.

On the whole, the author's fairness is very conspicuous. Though attached to Napoleon, he is by no means a blind partisan, and when he thinks the Emperor in the wrong, does not scruple to say so. When, as in the case of Napoleon's conduct towards Prince Hatzfeld, or his treatment of Hofer, we miss any expression of the reprobation with which most honest men regard those deeds, it is clearly because General Marbot only knew the versions current in France. He was not writing history, still less criticism; nor does he, as a rule, lay any claim to special knowledge in regard to matters which did not fall under his personal observation. For this reason it has been thought worth while to depart from the course usually and rightly followed in the case of translations, and to append an occasional note to statements which seem at variance with the facts as established after investigation of evidence by professed historians (and that even in cases where Marbot's evidence ought probably to be accepted), most of all in those portions of the story which are especially

likely to interest English readers. That these notes may now and then have been prompted by a feeling akin to that which made Dr. Johnson object to 'letting the Whig dogs have the best of it' the translator is not concerned to deny. If so, it is a tribute to the interest of the book. It should here be mentioned that in the first volume the notes are practically all due to the translator. In the second volume, where the French editors have annotated more freely, he has distinguished his own additions by brackets. Where names have been suppressed by the French editors it has been felt that any attempt to supply them would hardly be in good taste.

As to the question which has been raised in some quarters with regard to the genuineness of the Memoirs, it will suffice to say that there are persons of the highest authority who were acquainted with General Marbot, saw the Memoirs in MS. during his lifetime, and vouch for the virtual identity of the book as now published with what they then saw. Its genuineness once established, it is hardly possible to doubt that it is a faithful record. There is sincerity in every line of it. With an utter absence of anything like swagger, there is no pretence of self-depreciation. Whether in his younger days Marbot performs some daring feat of arms, or in a more responsible position saves his regiment by his own good management from some of the worst miseries of the Russian retreat, he knows that what he did is creditable to him, and does not mind, in a modest way, taking credit for it. When his services are recognised, his delight is child-like; '*C'était un des plus beaux jours de ma vie*' is almost a refrain, at least in the first half of the book; when the promised reward is delayed, he makes no affectation of indifference. The boyish countenance which he seems to have borne, even at thirty years old, is the outward sign of a boyish temperament, using the word in its best sense and in no

way so as to detract from the type of an almost ideal soldier such as the book presents to us, the soldier who—

> Through the heat of conflict keeps the law
> In calmness made, and sees what he foresaw;
> Or if an unexpected call succeed,
> Come when it will, is equal to the need.
>
> . . . . .
>
> Is yet a soul whose master-bias leans
> To homefelt pleasures and to gentle scenes.

But the book needs no introduction to English readers. Since its appearance in France, more than half a year ago, many notices of it have appeared, in our reviews and magazines, from the pens of approved men of letters, and must have made many, even of those who do not read French with ease, desirous of its further acquaintance. To some at least of these it is hoped that the present version may be of service.

PORTRAIT AND MAPS IN VOLUME I.

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THE MEMOIRS

OF THE

BARON DE MARBOT

CHAPTER I

[I WAS born August 18, 1782, at my father's château of Larivière, in the vale of Beaulieu, on the borders of the Limousin and Quercy, now in the Department of Corrèze. My father was an only son, as were his father and grandfather before him. His income from land consequently amounted to what was, for our province, a considerable sum. Our family was of noble origin, although it had for a long time dropped any title; but our mode of living was what was called 'noble'—that is, we lived on our own income, without adding to it by any profession or trade. The house was connected by marriage with many of the good families of the neighbourhood, and on terms of friendship with others—a point worth remarking, as showing the respect in which it was held at a period when the old nobility was in its full pride and power.

My father was born in 1753. He had received an excellent education and was a thoroughly cultivated man, loving study, literature, and art. Naturally hot-tempered, he had acquired self-control from the ways of the society in which he lived; and, being extremely kind-hearted, he would always do his best to efface the impression of any hasty word which in the first impulse of anger might have escaped him. He was a splendid man—very tall and strongly built; of dark complexion, with severe but handsome and regular features. His

mother died when he was a lad; my grandfather was old and infirm, and nearly blind from the effects of a flash of lightning, and the management of the household was left to an elderly cousin, Mlle. Oudinet de Beaulieu. Thus my father on his first entry into active life found himself practically his own master. The only use, however, which he made of his liberty was to accept the offer made to him by his neighbour and friend, Colonel the Marquis d'Estresse, of a sub-lieutenant's commission in the body-guard of Louis XV. From this he passed in 1781 to General Count de Schomberg's regiment of dragoons with the rank of captain, and in the following year became aide-de-camp to the general.

Some years before this my grandfather had died, and my father, in 1776, had married the daughter of M. de Certain, a gentleman of small means but old family living within a few miles of our home at the château of Laval de Cère. Mme. de Certain belonged to the family of Verdal, which claims kindred with St. Roch[1]—a Verdal having, it is said, married a sister of the saint at Montpellier. I cannot vouch for the truth of the story, but I know that before the Revolution there existed at the château of Gouveau, still in the possession of the Verdal family, a stone bench, held in great veneration by the mountain-folk of the country, because St. Roch, when visiting his sister, was fond of sitting on it. It commands a better view of the country than can be had from the château, one of the most gloomy of fortresses.

M. and Mme. de Certain had three sons and a daughter. Each of these, according to the old custom, bore the title of one of the family estates. Thus the eldest son, who was at this time a captain in the Penthièvre regiment of foot, had the surname of Canrobert, which his son, my cousin, has since rendered illustrious; the second son, lieutenant in the same regiment, was called De l'Isle; the third, a comrade of my father's in the body-guard, La Coste. The daughter, my mother, was known as Mlle. du Puy.

[1] St. Roch (1295–1327), the patron-saint of the plague-stricken, was son of Jean de la Croix, a distinguished citizen of Montpellier, and, through his grandmother, great-grandson of Charles of Anjou.

At that time the public coaches were few, dirty, and uncomfortable, and no man of fashion would ever travel in one. Elderly persons and invalids travelled in post-chaises, young gentlemen and officers in the saddle. Among the body-guard a custom which to us seems quaint enough had sprung up. Each was only on duty for three months in every year, and they were thus divided into four groups: those whose homes were in districts possessing a good breed of horses—such as Brittany, Auvergne, the Limousin—were expected to buy them, at prices not exceeding 100 francs, saddle and bridle included. When the day for returning to duty arrived, all those belonging to the same province met at some appointed rendezvous and rode, a merry caravan, to Versailles, stopping at regular stations, where good quarters and a good supper at a moderate price, agreed on beforehand, were ready for them. As they rode along, laughing, singing, chatting, telling stories (of which each was bound to produce a supply when his turn came), their numbers were constantly swelled by the arrival of comrades from the districts they traversed. Finally, they got to Versailles as another detachment was ready to start on its leave. The outgoing party bought the nags of the incomers at the established price of 100 francs, rode them to the paternal mansion, and then turned them out to grass for nine months. On their return to duty they disposed of them as they had acquired them; and in this way the horses with one master after another went about to every province of France.

In these journeys and during their turn of duty my father became very intimate with M. Certain de la Coste and, through him, with the rest of the family, and ultimately married Mlle. du Puy. They had four children—all sons. The eldest, Adolphe, is now major-general; I was the second; Theodore, the third; Felix, the youngest. We were born at intervals of about two years.]

I was of strong constitution, and never had an illness save the small-pox; but my life was nearly cut short by an accident which happened when I was three years old. By reason of my snub nose and round face my father called me

'the kitten.' That was quite inducement enough to set me imitating a kitten, and I used to delight in going about on all-fours mewing. Every day I used to go upstairs in this way to the second floor, to be with my father in his library, where he used to pass the hottest part of the day. When he heard his 'kitten' mew he would open the door and give me a volume of Buffon, that I might look at the pictures while he was reading. This I thought excellent fun; but one day I was not received with the usual welcome. My father, probably intent on more serious matters, did not open to his 'kitten.' Vainly I mewed more and more, in my most insinuating tones; the door remained closed. Then I noticed, on a level with the floor, a hole, which in all the country-houses in the South of France is made at the bottom of the door to allow the cat to get into the rooms, known as the 'cat-hole.' This was obviously my way, and I gently slipped my head through. But my body would not follow, nor could I draw my head back: it was caught. Though I was beginning to be strangled, I had so completely identified myself with my part of kitten, that, instead of speaking to let my father know of my unpleasant situation, I *mewed* with all my might, like a cat undergoing strangulation. It seems I did it so well that my father, thinking it part of the joke, was seized with a fit of helpless laughter. Suddenly, however, the mewing grew faint; my face turned blue; I swooned away. I imagine my father's alarm when he perceived the truth. With some difficulty he lifted the door from its hinges, released me, and carried me, still unconscious, to my mother. She, thinking me dead, was seized with violent hysterics. When I came to, a doctor was in the act of bleeding me. The sight of my own blood, and the anxiety of the whole household crowding round my mother and myself, made so vivid an impression on my childish imagination that the whole affair has remained deeply graven on my memory.

While my childhood was passing peacefully great events were preparing. The storm of revolution was already

grumbling, and it was not long before it burst; 1789 had come. The first effect which the assembling of the States-General produced upon provincial tranquillity was discord in nearly every family. Ours did not escape: for my father, who had long been accustomed to censure the abuses under which France laboured, acquiesced in principle in the proposed reforms, without any notion of the atrocities which would follow in the train of the changes. His three brothers-in-law, on the other hand, and his friends rejected all alterations of the established state of things. Hence arose debates, of which I understood nothing, but was none the less distressed at seeing my mother endeavouring with tears to keep the peace between brothers and husband. Meanwhile, without knowing why, I was on the side of the moderate democrats, who had chosen my father, as unquestionably the ablest man of the neighbourhood, for their leader.

The Constituent Assembly abolished feudal quit-rents.[1] My father, as a man of noble family, possessed sundry such, which his father had bought, and was the first to accept the law. The peasants, waiting to follow his lead, as soon as they found that he ceased to collect his rents, ceased to pay theirs. Then came the division of France into departments. My father was appointed administrator of Corrèze, and, soon after, member of the Legislative Assembly.

My three uncles and nearly all the nobility of the district had gone abroad at once; and war seemed imminent. With the view of inducing all citizens to arm, and perhaps, too, of judging how far it could reckon on the energy of the people at large, the Government spread a report simultaneously in every parish that brigands under the leadership of the *émigrés* were coming to put down the new constitutions. The tocsin was rung in every church. Each man took up what arms he could; the national guards were organised, and the country with a warlike air awaited the alleged brigands, who were generally said to be in the next parish.

Rentes féodales, rent originally paid in lieu of military service by tenants qualified for such service, as opposed to rent paid by *roturiers*, for whom, as Hallam observes, there appears to be no English equivalent.

None appeared, but the effect was produced; France had found herself in arms, and had shown that she was ready to defend herself. We were in the country alone with my mother, when this alarm, known as the Day of Fear, occurred. I was surprised, and should no doubt have been frightened had I not seen my mother pretty calm. I have always believed that my father, knowing her discretion, had given her a hint of what was to happen.

At the beginning there were no excesses on the part of the peasantry. They had always in our district preserved a great respect for the old families. But when the town demagogues got at them attacks began on the houses of the gentry, nominally to search for concealed *émigrés*, really for plunder. My mother's anxiety was heightened when her mother arrived, driven from her own house, which on the flight of her sons had been declared national property. Even my father's known patriotism, and the fact that he was then serving in the Army of the Pyrenees as captain of chasseurs, was insufficient to prevent the confiscation of a house which he had bought ten years ago at Saint-Céré. It was declared national property on the ground that it had passed by private contract, and that the vendor had left the country without ratifying the sale before a notary. It was sold by auction, and bought by the president of the district, at whose instance the proceedings had taken place. Finally, our own house was visited. They behaved politely to my mother, but said that they must burn the title-deeds of the feudal rents, and ascertain that her brothers were not concealed about the place. My mother gave them the deeds, and pointed out that her brothers, being, as they were aware, no fools, were not likely to have gone abroad in order to come back to France and hide in her house. They admitted the force of the argument, had a meal, burnt the deeds in the middle of the courtyard, and retired without doing any damage, shouting, 'Hurrah for the nation and citizen Marbot!' bidding my mother write and tell him that they loved him much, and that his family was quite safe with them.

Before long, however, my mother, not feeling sure that

her position as sister to three *émigrés* was sufficiently balanced by that of wife to one of the country's defenders to ensure her against inconvenience, decided to leave home for a time. Like many others, as she has since told me, she was convinced that a few months would see the end of the disturbances. She determined to go to Rennes. One of her uncles, who had formerly served in the Penthièvre regiment of foot, had on leaving the service married the widow of a member of the parliament of that city. With her my mother proposed to stay, taking me with her; but at the moment of starting I was attacked with painful boils, which made me too ill to travel so far. I was therefore left in charge of a friend—Mlle. Mongalvi, the mistress of a small girls' school at Turenne, where my mother had been one of the first pupils. 'A boy in a girls' school?' you say. Well, yes; but you must observe that I was a very quiet and obedient child, and only eight years old. The young ladies, who were mostly between sixteen and twenty, petted me to their hearts' content; and my only regret was that my stay among them would, as I imagined, be but of short duration. As it turned out, I remained there for four years.

My mother reached her uncle's house at Rennes with the intention of staying two or three months. Public events followed with rapidity. The Terror bathed France in blood, and civil war broke out in Brittany and Vendée. Travelling in those parts became impossible. My father was still with the army in the Pyrenees and in Spain, having been promoted to the rank of general of division. The end of it was that my mother remained at Rennes for several years also.

Long afterwards, when I read how 'Vert-Vert' lived among the Visitandines of Nevers, I said, 'That is myself in the ladies' school at Turenne.' Like the parrot, I was spoilt by mistresses and scholars as much as any child could be. I had only to wish in order to get; nothing was good enough for me. I became perfectly healthy; my complexion was clear and fresh; and the young ladies contended for the privilege of kissing me and tending me. When we played prisoner's base I was allowed always to catch, never to be

caught; they read me stories, they sang to me. One reminiscence connected with this time is that when the news of the king's execution arrived Mlle. Mongalvi caused the whole school to kneel and say prayers for the repose of his soul. An indiscretion on the part of any one of them might have brought her into serious trouble. But the pupils were old enough to understand the state of affairs, and I perceived that the matter should not be talked about; so it was never known beyond the house.

CHAPTER II

I REMAINED in my pleasant quarters till November 1793, when my father, who was in command of a camp which had been formed at Toulouse, took the opportunity of a few days' leave to come and see me at Turenne. His appearance in the uniform of a general officer with sword and enormous moustache, hair short and unpowdered, was a strange contrast to my recollection of him in the peaceful days at Larivière. As I have said, though of stern countenance he was exceedingly kind, especially to children; so we met with the keenest delight on my part, and abundance of caresses on his. His gratitude was great to the kind ladies who had taken really maternal care of me; but, as I was now in my twelfth year, he naturally decided that the time had come for a more masculine education. He found on examining me that, while I was well up in prayers and hymns, my knowledge of history, geography, even spelling, was limited. So it was decided that I should go with him to Toulouse, where my brother Adolphe was already, and that we should both be placed at the military college of Sorèze, the only large establishment of the kind which the Revolution had spared.

At Cressensac we found Captain Gault, my father's aide-de-camp. While we were halting here I saw a sight that I had never seen before. A marching column of gendarmes, national guards, and volunteers entered the little town, their band playing. I thought it grand, but could not understand why they should have in the middle of them a dozen carriages full of old gentlemen, ladies, and children, all looking very sad. My father was furious at the sight. He drew back from the window, and as he strode up and down the room with his aide-de-camp I heard him exclaim: 'Those scoundrels

of the Convention have spoilt the Revolution, which might have been so splendid! There is another batch of innocent people being taken off to prison because they are of good family, or have relations who have gone abroad! It is terrible!' I understood him perfectly, and, like him, I vowed hatred to the party of terror who spoilt the Revolution of 1789. I may be asked, Why, then, did my father continue to serve a Government for which he had no esteem? Because he held that to repel the enemy from French territory was under all circumstances honourable, and in no way pledged a soldier to approval of the atrocities committed by the Convention in its internal administration.

What my father had said awakened my lively interest in the persons whom the carriages contained. I found out that they were noble families who had been that morning arrested in their houses and were being carried to prison at Souilhac. I was wondering how these old men, women, and children could be dangerous to the country when I heard one of the children ask for food. A lady begged a national guard to let her get out to buy provisions; he refused harshly; the lady then held out an *assignat*, and asked him to be so kind as to get her a loaf; to which he replied: 'Do you think I am one of your old lackeys?' His brutality disgusted me; and having noticed that our servant Spire had placed in the pockets of the carriage sundry rolls, each lined with a sausage, I took two of them, and approaching the carriage where the children were, I threw these in when the guard's back was turned. Mother and children made such expressive signs of gratitude that I decided to victual all the prisoners, and accordingly took them all the stores that Spire had packed for the nourishment of four persons during the forty-eight hours which it would take us to reach Toulouse. We started without any suspicion on his part of the way in which I had disposed of them. The children kissed their hands to me, the parents bowed, and we set off. We had not gone a hundred yards when my father, who in his haste to escape from a sight which distressed him had not taken a meal at the inn, felt hungry and asked for the provisions. Spire

mentioned the pockets in which he had placed them. My father and M. Gault rummaged the whole carriage and found nothing. My father pitched into Spire; Spire from the coach-box swore by all the fiends that he had victualled the carriage for two days. I was rather in a quandary; however, not liking to let poor Spire be scolded any more, I confessed what I had done, fully expecting a slight reproof for having acted on my own authority. But my father only kissed me, and long afterwards he used to delight to speak of my conduct on that occasion. This is why, my children, I thought I might relate it to you. There is always happiness in the recollection of praise earned from those whom we have loved and lost.

From Cressensac to Toulouse the road swarmed with volunteers going gaily to join the Army of the Pyrenees, and the air rang with their patriotic songs. The bustle delighted me, and I should have been happy but for a physical discomfort. I had never made a long journey in a carriage, and during this one I suffered from *sea-sickness*. My father stopped at night to let me rest; but I was very tired when we got to Toulouse. However, the meeting with my brother, whom I had not seen for four or five years, was a great joy, and soon set me up again.

My father, as general commanding the camp (which was at Le Miral, near Toulouse), had a right to quarters, and the town council had assigned him the Hôtel Rességuier, a fine house, of which the owner had gone abroad. Mme. Rességuier and her son occupied a retired part of the house, and my father ordered that they should be treated with all respect. He entertained largely—indeed, to an extent which his general's allowance of eighteen rations per diem was insufficient to meet. His pay, except for the sum of eight francs a month, which all officers, of whatever rank, received in cash, was paid in *assignats*, the value of which decreased daily; and he was compelled to draw upon the savings of former years. From the date of his return to active service his fortune was seriously diminished. Though the spirit of subordination and good manners generally were just then at

a low ebb in France, his influence was such that a tone of perfect courtesy was always maintained in his drawing-room and at his table alike.

Among the officers serving in the camp, two were especial favourites with my father, and received invitations more often than any. One, Augereau by name, was adjutant-general, that is, a colonel on the staff; the other, Lannes, a lieutenant of grenadiers in a volunteer battalion from the Gers. Both became marshals of the Empire, and I was aide-de-camp to both. You will hear more of them later on.

At this time Augereau had just come from service in Vendée, after previously escaping from the prisons of the Inquisition at Lisbon. He had been noticed for his courage and the ease with which he handled his troops. He was a good tactician, having learnt the science in Prussia, where he had long served in the foot-guards of Frederick the Great; whence his nickname of 'le grand Prussien.' He was always dressed irreproachably, in perfect trim; hair curled and powdered, long *queue*, his long riding-boots highly polished, and withal a most martial bearing; all the more conspicuous that at that time a brilliant get-up was not common in the French army. The volunteers of which it was mainly composed had not been accustomed to wear uniform, and were careless as to their toilet. Still no one ventured to rally Augereau on this score; he was well known to be handy with his 'tool,' and of undoubted courage. He had made the celebrated Saint-George, the stoutest swordsman in France, lower his colours. His reputation as a tactician caused my father to entrust to him the training of the newly-raised battalions of which the division mostly consisted, coming chiefly from the central and south-western provinces. Augereau got them into excellent shape, little thinking that in so doing he was laying the foundations of his future renown; for the troops which my father then commanded formed in after times the celebrated 'Augereau's division' which did so splendidly in the Eastern Pyrenees and in Italy. He came almost daily to see my father, and, finding himself valued, vowed for him a friendship which

was always true to itself, and of which I felt the good effects after my mother's death.

Lieutenant Lannes was the most lively of young Gascons; witty, merry, devoid of learning or education, but desirous to learn, at a time when such a desire was rare. He became a very good instructor, and, having plenty of self-esteem, he received with inexpressible delight the praises which my father deservedly lavished on him. Out of gratitude, moreover, he spoilt his general's children to the best of his ability.

One fine morning my father received orders to strike his camp at Le Miral and march with his division to join the force under General Dugommier, then besieging Toulon, which the English had captured by a surprise.[1] He then pointed out to me that I needed to study more seriously than had been possible in a girls' school, and that the next day he should take me to the college of Sorèze, where he had already entered my brother and myself. I was quite taken aback. I could hardly believe that I was not to go back to my girl friends and Mlle. Mongalvi. Nor could the sight of the troops and guns which my father reviewed at Castelnaudary comfort me. My mind was full of the professors among whom I was going to be thrown. That night my father heard that the English had evacuated Toulon[2] (December 18, 1793), and that he was ordered to the Eastern Pyrenees. He decided, therefore, to leave us at Sorèze the next day and go on to Perpignan.

As we left Castelnaudary my father stopped his carriage by the famous toll under which the Constable Montmorency was made prisoner by the troops of Louis XIII. after the defeat of the supporters of the revolted Gaston d'Orléans. He talked about the story with his aides-de-camp, and my

[1] August 27, 1793. As a matter of history, the surrender of Toulon seems to have been due to the fact that much disaffection to the Republican Government existed in the town and fleet.

[2] Taking the French fleet, or most of it, with them. For a full account of the proceedings at Toulon, see James's *Naval History of Great Britain*, vol. i. pp. 91, *sqq*. It was at this recapture of Toulon that Napoleon Buonaparte, then an artillery officer, first distinguished himself.

brother, who was already well educated, joined in the conversation. My notions on French history generally were very dim, and I knew nothing of the details. I had never heard of the battle of Castelnaudary, of Gaston or his revolt, or of the capture and execution of the Constable Montmorency; and I was much ashamed to see that my father, knowing that I could not have answered, put no questions to me on the subject. I privately concluded, therefore, that he was quite right to send me to the college, and my regrets were transformed into a resolution to learn all that I ought to know. Still my heart sank when I saw the high gloomy walls of the cloister in which I was to be shut up. I was now eleven years and four months old.

CHAPTER III

THE College of Sorèze dated from the time of the expulsion of the Jesuits in the reign of Louis XV. Their supporters maintained that they alone knew how to educate; their rivals, the Benedictines, resolved to show that they could do it as well. To this end they converted four of their houses into colleges, Sorèze being one. The place flourished; lay teachers were engaged, and settled with their families in the town; girls' schools were started, to profit by the available teaching-power; and many foreigners, English, Spanish, American, took up their abode there for the period of their children's education. The little town became remarkable for the high standard of instruction and cultivation to be found among all classes.

The Benedictines went much into society, and were extremely popular. Consequently, when the Revolution broke out, and the property of religious houses was sold, the neighbours urged the principal, Dom Ferlus, to buy in the convent and annexed domain. Instead of bidding against him, they lent him the purchase money (which he repaid in timber), and the local authorities permitted payment to be spread over a long time. The former principal, Dom Despaulx, retired, having had conscientious scruples about taking the civic oath;[1] but Dom Ferlus and the other brethren accepted the position, and under their management the college continued to prosper. They had no money; but their estates provided all necessaries, and the teachers' salaries were paid in kind. Later, on the death of Dom Ferlus, the college passed into

[1] The oath of fidelity to the Constitution, including the civil constitution of the Church, which the clergy were ordered, by a decree of the National Assembly in January 1791, to take on pain of deprivation.

the hands of his brother, an Oratorian who had renounced his orders and married. He was a man of far inferior capacity; and under him and his son-in-law, an ex-officer of artillery, who succeeded him, it lost its importance. The hostility of the Jesuits, who returned in 1814, also aided its downfall.

When I entered, however, it was at the height of its success under Dom Ferlus. The monks wore lay clothes, and were addressed as 'citizen'; but otherwise no change of any importance had taken place in the routine of the school. Of course it could not but show some traces of the feverish agitation which prevailed outside. The walls were covered with Republican 'texts.' We were forbidden to use the term 'monsieur.' When we went to the refectory, or for a walk, we sang the *Marseillaise*, or other Republican hymns. The exploits of our armies formed the chief subject of conversation; and some of the elder boys enrolled themselves among the volunteers. We learnt drill, riding, fortification, &c. This military atmosphere tended to make the manners of the pupils somewhat free-and-easy; and as for their outward person, thick boots, only cleaned on *décadis*, grey socks, brown coat and trousers, shirts tattered and inkstained, no necktie or cap, untidy hair, hands worthy of a charcoal-burner, gave them a rough appearance enough.

Now imagine me clean, well brushed, in a good cloth suit, shot into the middle of seven hundred young imps dressed in this fashion. One of them shouted, 'Here are some new boys!' and in a swarm they left their games and came and crowded round us, looking at us as if we had been some strange beasts. My father kissed us and departed. I was in utter despair. There I was, for the first time in my life, all alone, for my brother was in the large quadrangle, and I in the small. It was the depth of winter, and exceedingly cold; the rules of the school forbad the pupils to have any fire. On the other hand, they were well fed; for while France was being laid waste by famine, the good arrangement of Dom Ferlus insured plenty in the college. The fare was certainly all that could be desired for schoolboys.

In spite of this it seemed to me a most wretched supper, and the sight of the dishes which were on the table before me disgusted me; they might have offered me ortolans and I should have refused them, my heart was so full. The meal ended as it had begun, with a patriotic song. At the verse of the *Marseillaise* which begins with the words 'Amour sacré de la patrie' all knelt. Then we marched out as we had come in, to the drum, and so to bed.

Those who were in the large quadrangle had each a room to himself, and were locked in at night; those in the smaller slept four in a room. I was put with Guirand, Romestan, and Lagarde. They were almost as new comers as I, and we sat together at meals. I was glad to be with them, for they seemed, and really were, good fellows. I was horrified, however, to see how narrow my bed was, and how thin the mattress, and, above all, disgusted at finding the bedstead was of iron. I had never seen such before. Still, it was all very clean, and, in spite of my troubles, I slept soundly, being thoroughly tired by the new sensations of this critical day of my life.

Next morning the drum beat very early, and its horrible roll in the dormitories seemed to me terribly barbarous. Think of my feelings when I discovered that while I was asleep they had taken away my nice clothes, my fine stockings, and my pretty shoes, and replaced them by the coarse garments and the clumsy foot-gear of the school! I cried with rage.

Now that I have told you my first impressions on entering the college, I will spare you the history of my troubles for the next six months. I had been so much petted at the ladies' school that I was bound to suffer both mentally and physically in my new surroundings. I became very melancholy, and if my constitution had been less strong I should certainly have fallen ill. It was one of the saddest periods of my life. Gradually, however, as I got used to the work, my spirits improved; I was very fond of my lessons in French literature, in geography, and, most of all, in history, and I got on well with them. I became fairly good in mathematics,

in Latin, in riding, and in fencing; I learnt my musketry exercise thoroughly, and I took much delight in drilling with the school battalion, commanded by an old retired captain.

As I have said, when I entered the college at the end of 1793, the sanguinary rule of the Convention was at its heaviest. Commissioners were travelling through the provinces, and nearly all those who had any influence in the South came to visit the establishment of Sorèze. Citizen Ferlus had a knack of his own for persuading them that it was their duty to support an institution which was training, in great numbers, young people who were the hope of the country. Thus he got all that he wanted out of them. Very often they allowed him to have large quantities of fagots which were destined for the supply of the armies, on the plea that we formed part of the army, and were its nursery.

When these representatives arrived they were received like sovereigns: the pupils put on their military uniforms, the battalion was drilled in their presence; sentries were placed at every door, as in a garrison town; we acted pieces inspired by the purest patriotism; we sang national hymns. When they inspected the classes, especially the history classes, an opportunity was always found to introduce some dissertation on the excellence of Republican government, and the patriotic virtues which result from it. I remember in this connection that the deputy Chabot, who had been a Capuchin, was questioning me one day on Roman history. He asked me what I thought of Coriolanus, who, when his fellow-citizens, forgetful of his old services, had offended him, took refuge with the Volsci, the Roman's sworn enemies. Dom Ferlus and the masters were in terror lest I should approve the Roman's conduct; but I said that a good citizen should never bear arms against his country, nor dream of revenging himself on her, however just grounds he might have for discontent. The representative was so pleased with my answer that he embraced me, and complimented the head of the college and his assistants on the good principles which they instilled into their pupils.

This little success in no way diminished my hatred for

the Convention. Young as I was, I had sense enough to understand that in order to save the country it was not necessary to bathe in the blood of Frenchmen, and that the guillotinings and massacres were odious crimes. There is no need here to speak of the oppression under which our unhappy country then suffered; you have read it in history. But no colours that history can employ to depict the horrors of which the Terrorists were guilty can bring the picture up to the reality. What was most surprising was the stupidity of the masses in allowing themselves to be led by men of whom very few had any capacity; for nearly all the members of the Convention were below the average in ability. Even their boasted courage was due mainly to their fear of each other, since it was through dread of being guillotined that they acquiesced in the wishes of their leaders. During my exile in 1815 I came across numbers of *conventionnels* who had been compelled to leave France as I had. They were utterly devoid of steady principles, and they admitted to me that they only voted for the execution of Louis XVI. and a heap of hateful decrees in order to save their own heads. The recollections of this period made such an impression on me that I detest anything which might tend to re-establish democracy, so convinced I am that the masses are blind, and that no government is so bad as the government of the people.

CHAPTER IV

I REMAINED at Sorèze till February 1799; I was then sixteen and a half years old. A friend of my father's, M. Dorignac, brought me to Paris, where we arrived on the night when the Odéon Theatre was burnt down for the first time. The blaze was to be seen reflected in the sky from a great distance on the Orleans road, and I quite believed that it was the natural glare of the street lamps of the capital. My family were living in the Rue du Faubourg Saint-Honoré, where I joined them the next morning. I have seldom had a happier day.

In the spring of 1799 the Republic was still in existence, the Government consisting of an executive Directory of five members, and two Chambers called 'Conseil des Anciens' and 'Conseil des Cinq Cents.' My father was intimate with many conspicuous people; I met at his house such men as Bernadotte, Joseph and Lucien Bonaparte, Napper Tandy (the leader of the Irish refugees), General Joubert, Cambacérès. In my mother's company I often saw Madame Bonaparte, Madame de Condorcet, and occasionally Madame de Staël.

A month after I came to Paris a general election took place. My father, tired of the incessant worries of political life, and not liking to be debarred from a share in the great deeds of our armies, declined to stand again, and expressed his wish to re-enter active service. The course of events suited his purpose well. With the new Chambers came a change of Ministry. Bernadotte became War Minister, and promised my father a post with the Army of the Rhine. As he was about to start for Mainz, the news came of the defeat of the Army of Italy under General Scherer; and Joubert, then in command of the 17th division at Paris, was sent by

the Directory to replace him. The vacant command, one of political importance, and requiring a capable and strong man, was offered to my father. As his chief reason for resigning his seat in the Chamber had been his desire for active service, he at first declined; but on Bernadotte showing him his appointment already signed, with the remark that as a friend he begged him, and as a Minister ordered him, to accept it, my father yielded. On the following day he established himself at the head-quarters of the Paris division. The house has now been pulled down, and several houses stand on its site. It was on the Quai Voltaire, at the corner of the Rue des Saints-Pères.

My father had appointed as chief of the staff his old friend Colonel Ménard. I was delighted with all the military bustle which surrounded him: the head-quarters always full of officers of all ranks; a squadron of cavalry, a battalion of infantry, and six guns permanently stationed in front of the door; orderlies coming and going. I thought it much more amusing than the themes and versions of Sorèze.

At that time there was much excitement in France, and particularly in Paris: we were on the eve of a catastrophe. The Russians, under the celebrated Souvaroff, had entered Italy, and had severely defeated our army at Novi. Joubert, the commander-in-chief, had been killed; Souvaroff was marching on our army of Switzerland, where Masséna was in command. We had few troops on the Rhine. The peace conference which had been begun at Rastadt had been dissolved and our plenipotentiaries assassinated.[1] The whole of Germany was arming anew against us; the Directory had fallen into discredit, and, having neither troops nor money to levy them, in order to procure funds, had just decreed a forced loan, which had completed the measure of its unpopularity. Our last hopes were in Masséna; he alone could stop the Russians and prevent the invasion of France. The

[1] The Congress of Rastadt, held in order to settle some details in the Treaty of Campo Formio, sat from November 1797 to January 1799, when it was dissolved by the French plenipotentiaries. These were attacked by Austrian troops as they were returning to France, and two of them killed.

Directory sent despatch after despatch ordering him to give battle; but, like a modern Fabius, not wishing to risk the safety of his country, he waited till some false move on the part of the enemy should offer a chance of beating him.

Here I may relate an anecdote which shows on how small a matter the destiny of a state and the reputation of commanders sometimes turn. The Directory, irritated at seeing that Masséna did not obey their repeated order to give battle, resolved to recall him. They feared, however, that the commander-in-chief would take no notice of their recall, and would simply put the despatch in his pocket, if they forwarded it by an ordinary messenger, and accordingly instructed the War Minister to send to Switzerland a staff officer commissioned to hand the order of recall to Masséna in public, and to give to Chérin, his chief of the staff, a commission conferring on him the command of the army. Bernadotte imparted these arrangements in confidence to my father, who expressed disapproval of them, explaining how dangerous it was, on the eve of a decisive affair, to deprive the Army of Switzerland of a general in whom it had confidence, in order to replace him by one who had more experience in secretary's work than in manœuvring troops. Besides this the position of the armies might change. It would therefore be necessary to entrust with this mission a man capable of judging the state of affairs, and who was not likely to hand the order of recall to Masséna immediately before or during a battle. He persuaded the Minister to entrust the duty to M. Gault, his aide-de-camp, who should go to Switzerland under the ostensible pretext of ascertaining if the contractors had delivered the stipulated number of horses, and should be authorised to withhold or to hand over the order of recall to Masséna and the commission to General Chérin according as he should see fit under the circumstances. It was a good deal to confide to the judgment of a mere captain; but M. Gault did not disappoint the good opinion formed of him. He reached the head-quarters of the army five days before the battle of Zurich, and found the troops so full of confidence in Masséna, and Masséna himself so calm and so firm, that

he felt no doubt of his success. He maintained, therefore, the most profound silence with regard to his secret powers, and after being present at the battle of Zurich he returned to Paris without any suspicion on Masséna's part that this modest captain had had in his hands the power of depriving him of the glory of winning one of the finest victories of the age.

The ill-judged recall of Masséna would probably have involved the defeat of General Chérin, the invasion of France by the Russians, and by the Germans after them, and ultimately, perhaps, a European overturn. Chérin was killed in the battle without ever suspecting the intentions of the Government with regard to himself. The victory of Zurich, while preventing an invasion, gave the Directory only a momentary credit. The Government was breaking down on all sides; no one had any confidence in it. The finances had collapsed, Vendée and Brittany were in complete insurrection, there were no troops in the country, the South was in a blaze, the Chambers were quarrelling with each other and with the Executive—in short, the state was on the brink of ruin.

Every politician was aware that great changes were necessary and inevitable, but opinions differed as to the remedies to be employed. The old Republicans, who stood by the Constitution of the year 3, which was still in force, held that to save the country it was enough to change some members of the Directory. Two of them were accordingly dismissed and replaced by Gohier and Moulins; but this was but a feeble palliative for the calamities under which the country was on the point of sinking, and the anarchical agitations continued. Therefore several of the Directors, among them the celebrated Sieyès, together with many of the Deputies and the vast majority of the public, held that in order to save France the reins of government should be put into the hands of some strong man who had already rendered illustrious services to the state. It was obvious also that such a chief could only be a soldier with a great influence in the army, who should be able to rekindle the enthusiasm of the nation, and go to

restore victory to our flag, and to hold off the foreigners who were ready to cross our frontier.

The one man who satisfied these conditions was General Bonaparte; but at this moment he was in Egypt, and the need was pressing. Joubert had just been killed in Italy. Masséna was illustrious for his many victories, an excellent general at the head of an army in the field, but in no sense a statesman. Bernadotte appeared to have neither the talents nor the character required to heal the ills of France. The reformers, therefore, turned their thoughts towards Moreau, though his character was weak and his undecided conduct on the 18th of Fructidor [1] inspired some fear as to his aptitude for governing. It is certain, however, that, failing a better man, it was proposed to him to put himself at the head of the party which wished to overthrow the Directory, and the chief post in the state was offered to him, with the title of President or Consul. Moreau, though a good soldier and brave enough, lacked political courage, and possibly distrusted his own ability to manage affairs so disordered as those of France then were. Being, moreover, selfish and indolent, he cared very little for the future of his country, and preferred the tranquillity of private life to the worry of politics. At any rate, he refused the offer, and retired to his estate of Grosbois to amuse himself with his favourite field sports.

[Those who wished to change the form of government had, therefore, no alternative but to seek the co-operation of General Bonaparte. Sieyès, who was the chief mover in the scheme, was President of the Directory; and his calculation was that if he could get Bonaparte into power, the general, while nominally the head of the Government, would confine his attention to military organisation, leaving to himself the real direction of affairs. As the sequel showed, he

[1] September 4, 1797, when the Directors Barras, Rewbeu, and La Révellière-Lepeaux, supported by the troops under Augereau, purged the Directory and Council of members—including Carnot, Pichegru, and others—suspected of Royalist tendencies. See below, p. 145.

mistook his man; but this was his thought when, acting through the Corsican Deputy, Salicetti, he sent a trusty secret agent to Bonaparte to inform him of the unsatisfactory state of affairs, and invite him to return and put himself at the head of the Government. Of his colleagues in the Directory, he found little difficulty in persuading Roger-Ducos that in the circumstances it was to their own interest no less than to that of the public to bring about the formation of a strong Government, in which their places would be less precarious; but the other three, Barras, Gohier, and Moulins, were unwilling to part with their power. Sieyès and those of his party resolved, therefore, to act without them, and to sacrifice them if affairs turned out as they planned.

Even with Bonaparte at hand it would be a difficult and dangerous business to overthrow the Directory without the support of the army, and more especially of the Paris division. Sieyès tried accordingly to win over Bernadotte and my father, first sounding them through the help of various Deputies who were at once their friends and his partisans. Later on I learnt that my father answered the half-advances of the astute Sieyès to the effect that, while he was well aware that the state of the country required prompt remedies, he had sworn to maintain the Constitution of the year 3, and he was not going to use his authority or the troops of his division to bring about the overthrow of that Constitution; after which he waited on Sieyès, resigned his command of the Paris division, and requested to have a division on active service. Sieyès was glad enough to get a man of my father's character out of the way before he could spoil the plot by strict adherence to his duty, and hastened to accede to his request. Bernadotte resigned at the same time, and was replaced by Dubois-Crancé.

There was some little delay before a man could be found to take my father's place; ultimately Sieyès gave the command to General Lefebvre, who was in Paris on leave, having been wounded with the Army of the Rhine. Lefebvre had been a sergeant in the Gardes Françaises; he was a brave soldier, and, as a general, good at executing distinct

orders; but he had no judgment or knowledge of politics, so that a dexterous application of words like 'glory,' 'country,' 'victory' was sure to make him a willing tool. He was just the man that Sieyès wanted for commandant in Paris; and so sure was he that when the time came Lefebvre would not resist the influence of Bonaparte and his own cajoleries, that he did not even take the trouble to let him know what was expected of him. The 18th of Brumaire showed that he judged right. Lefebvre put his troops at the disposal of Bonaparte when he overthrew the Directory and established the Consulate; and earned thereby, in later days, the high favour of the Emperor, the title of Marshal Duke of Dantzig, and heaps of wealth. I have sketched these events to explain what took my father to Italy: a move which had important results both to him and to me.]

After handing over his command to General Lefebvre my father returned to the house in the Faubourg Saint-Honoré, and attended only to the preparations for his departure to Italy.

Very trifling causes often influence human destiny. My father and mother were very intimate with M. Barairon, Registrar-General. One day they were going to breakfast with him, and took me with them. The conversation turned on my father's departure, and on the good conduct of my two younger brothers; finally, M. Barairon inquired, 'What is Marcellin to be?' 'A sailor,' answered my father; 'Captain Sibille has undertaken him, and is going to carry him off to Toulon.' Whereupon good Mme. Barairon (I have always been most grateful to her for it) remarked to my father that the French navy was utterly disorganised, that the finances were in too bad a state to allow of its being quickly reformed, and that, moreover, its inferiority to the English fleet would keep it for some time shut up in the ports. She wondered that he, a general officer of the land forces, should put his son in the navy instead of in a regiment where his father's name and services would be sure to make him welcome. She ended by saying, 'It would be better for you to take him to

Italy than send him to be bored to death on board a vessel blockaded in Toulon harbour.' My father had been for the moment captivated by Captain Sibille's proposal, but was too clear-sighted to fail to see the force of Mme. Barairon's arguments. He turned to me saying, 'Well, will you come to Italy with me and serve in the army?' I threw my arms round his neck and accepted with joy. My mother was equally glad, for she had been opposed to my father's first plan.

There was then no 'Ecole militaire,' and the only way to enter the army was in the ranks. My father took me straight to the office of the first *arrondissement* in the Place Beauvau and enlisted me in the 1st Regiment of Hussars (the old 'Bercheny'), which formed part of the division which he was about to command in Italy. This was September 3, 1799. He next took me to the tailor who supplied the Ministry of War with patterns and ordered for me a complete uniform and equipment. So I was actually a hussar; I was beside myself with joy. My joy was, however, alloyed by the thought that it would increase the vexation of my brother Adolphe, who was two years older than I and was still stuck at the college like a child. I decided that I would tell him of my enlistment and at the same moment inform him that I was going to spend in his company the month which would pass before my departure. I therefore begged my father to allow me to settle myself near Adolphe at Sainte-Barbe until the day when we should have to set out for Italy. He understood the motive of my request and approved it. The next day he took me himself. You may imagine my entry into the college! It was recreation time, but all games ceased on the spot, and the pupils, old and young, crowded round me, contending for the honour of touching my accoutrements. The hussar had a complete success. When the day of my departure came I took leave of my mother and my three brothers with grief, tempered though it was by my delight at entering on the career of arms.

CHAPTER V

Soon after my father had accepted a command in Italy, a vacancy occurred in that of a division of the Army of the Rhine. He would have preferred to be there, but an inevitable destiny drew him towards the country where he was to find a grave. He had a friend from his own province, M. Lachèze—his evil genius, I might say—who had been long Consul at Leghorn and Genoa, and had personal business interests in those parts. This infernal man was always setting before my father the most exaggerated pictures of the beauties of Italy, and pointing out how much was to be gained by restoring victory to an army that had been unfortunate, and how little chance of obtaining glory with the prosperous Army of the Rhine. My poor father let himself be captured by these arguments, thinking that where the danger was greatest most credit was to be gained, and adhered to his purpose of going to Italy. My mother opposed in vain. She had a secret presentiment that it would be better if my father was on the Rhine—a presentiment that was fulfilled, for she never saw him again.

Besides M. Gault, my father took another aide-de-camp, Major R——, who had been passed on to him by his friend General Augereau. This officer, who belonged to a Maintenon family, possessed talents and education of which he made little use; for, by a whim not uncommon at that time, he thought fit to adopt the style of a swashbuckler, for ever swearing, damning, and threatening to split people's heads. This bully had only one good point, and that one which then was rare: he was always most carefully dressed. My father was soon sorry that he had accepted him for his aide-de-camp

without knowing him, but he could not dismiss him without offending his old friend Augereau; and, though not liking him, he held that a general ought to make the most of his officers' military qualities without troubling himself too much about their manners. As, however, he did not care to have the company of M. R—— in a long journey, he had given him the duty of bringing his carriages and horses from Paris to Nice. Our old groom Spire, a faithful servant, accustomed to looking after stablemen, was put under his orders. M. R—— started a month before us in command of a numerous caravan—fifteen horses belonging to my father, besides those of the staff, the baggage wagons, and so on.

In my father's carriage travelled the unlucky M. Lachèze, Captain Gault, and I. Colonel Ménard, chief of the staff, with one of his assistant aides-de-camp, followed in a post-chaise. I had a very smart forage-cap, which I liked to wear always. One night, being troubled with my old enemy 'sea-sickness,' I was constantly putting my head out of window. My cap fell off; the carriage was going at the best pace of six stout horses. I did not dare to stop it, and my cap was lost. I was much distressed, but did not mention it for fear of the banter which would ensue as to the little care which the new soldier took of his property.

After staying a day at Mâcon with an old friend of my father's we pushed on towards Lyons. When we were changing horses at Limonest, within a few leagues of that town, we noticed that all the post-horses were adorned with tricoloured ribbons and the houses with flags. On asking the cause of this display we were told that Bonaparte had just arrived at Lyons. My father, thinking he knew for certain that Bonaparte was at the other end of Egypt, treated this piece of news as a joke. His astonishment was great when, on questioning the postmaster, who had just come from Lyons, he learnt that that official, who had served under Bonaparte in Italy and knew him well by sight, averred that he had seen him. 'He is at Lyons, in the Hotel ——. His brother Louis, General Berthier, Lannes, and Murat are with him; also many other officers and a mameluke.' This was pretty

positive evidence. Still the Revolution had given rise to so many impostures, and so much ingenuity had been shown in inventing stories to serve party purposes, that my father was still in doubt as we entered Lyons by the suburb of Vaise. The houses were all illuminated and beflagged, fireworks were being let off; our carriage could hardly make its way through the crowd. People were dancing in the open spaces, and the air rang with cries of 'Hurrah for Bonaparte! he will save the country!' This evidence was irresistible; we had to admit that Bonaparte was in Lyons. My father said, 'Of course I thought they would bring him, but I never suspected it would be so soon; they have played their game well. We shall see great events come to pass. Now I am sure that I was right in getting away from Paris; with the army I shall be able to serve my country without being mixed up in a *coup d'état*. It may be as necessary as it seems, but I dislike it altogether.' With that he fell into deep thought, lasting through the tedious interval required to make our way through the crowd, which grew thicker at every step, and reach our hotel.

Arrived there, we found it hung with lanterns and guarded by a battalion of grenadiers. They had given General Bonaparte the apartments ordered a week before for my father. Quick-tempered though he was, he said nothing, and when the landlord made somewhat confused apologies to the effect that he had been compelled to obey the orders of the town council, my father made no answer. On hearing that a lodging had been taken for us in a good hotel of the second class kept by a relation of the landlord's, my father confined himself to bidding M. Gault order the postilions to drive there. When we got there we found our courier—he was an excitable man, and, being well warmed by the numerous quenchers which he had taken at every halting-place on his long journey, had kicked up the devil's own row on learning, when he preceded us at the first hotel, that the apartments engaged for his master had been given to General Bonaparte. The aides-de-camp, hearing this fearful uproar and learning the cause of it, went to let their chief know

that General Marbot had been thrown over for him. At the same moment Bonaparte himself, through his open window, perceived my father's two carriages standing before the door. Up to then he had known nothing of his landlord's shabby behaviour towards my father, and, seeing that General Marbot, recently commandant of Paris, and at that moment at the head of a division of the Army of Italy, was too important a man for any offhand treatment, and that, moreover, he himself was returning with the intention of being on a good footing with everybody, he ordered one of his officers to go down at once and offer General Marbot to come and share his lodging with him in soldier fashion. But the carriages went on before the aide-de-camp could speak to my father; so Bonaparte started at once on foot in order to come and express his regret in person. The cheers of the crowd which followed him as he drew near our hotel might have given us notice, but we had heard so much cheering since we entered the town that it occurred to none of us to look out into the street. We were all in the sitting-room, and my father was pacing up and down plunged in meditation, when suddenly a waiter, throwing open both folding-doors, announced General Bonaparte.

On entering, he ran up to my father and embraced him; my father received him courteously but coldly. They were old acquaintances, and between persons of their rank a few words were sufficient to explain matters with regard to the lodging. They had much else to talk of, so they went alone into the bedroom, where they conferred together for more than an hour. Meanwhile the generals and officers who had come with Bonaparte from Egypt chatted with us in the sitting-room. I was never tired of studying their martial air, their faces bronzed by the Eastern sun, their strange costumes, and their Turkish sabres slung by cords. I listened attentively to their tales of the campaigns in Egypt and the battles fought there. I enjoyed the repetition of the celebrated names, Pyramids, Nile, Cairo, Alexandria, Acre, and so forth. But what delighted me most was the sight of the young mameluke Roustan. He had waited in the antechamber,

and I went there more than once to admire his costume, which he was pleased to show me. He could already speak French pretty well, and I was never tired of asking him questions. General Lannes remembered how he had let me fire his pistols in 1793, when he was serving under my father at the camp of Le Miral. He was very good-natured to me, and neither of us suspected then that I should one day be his aide-de-camp, and that he would die in my arms at Essling.

General Murat had been born in our own neighbourhood, and as he had been shopboy to a haberdasher at Saint-Céré in the days when my family used to spend the winter there, he had often come with goods for my mother. My father, too, had done him several kindnesses, for which he was always grateful. He kissed me and reminded me how he had often carried me when I was a baby. Later on I shall relate the life of this famous man who rose so high from so low an origin.

General Bonaparte and my father returned into the sitting-room, and introduced to each other the members of their respective staffs. Lannes and Murat were old acquaintances of my father's, and he received them very cordially. He was somewhat cold towards Berthier, whom he had seen in old days at Marseilles when he was in the body-guard and Berthier an engineer. General Bonaparte asked me very courteously for news of my mother, and complimented me in a kind manner on having taken up the military career so young. Then, gently pinching my ear—the flattering caress which he always employed to persons with whom he was pleased—he said, addressing my father, 'Here will be a second General Marbot some day.' His forecast has been verified, though at that time I had little hope of it. All the same, his words made me feel proud all over—it doesn't take much to awaken the pride of a child.

The visit came to an end, and my father gave no indication of what had passed between General Bonaparte and himself; but I learnt later on that Bonaparte, without actually betraying his schemes, had endeavoured by the most

adroit cajoleries to enlist my father on his side. My father, however, steadily evaded the question.

So shocked was he at the sight of the people of Lyons running to meet Bonaparte, as if he were already sovereign of France, that he expressed a wish to get away next morning at daybreak; but his carriages required repair, and he was forced to stay an entire day at Lyons. I took the opportunity of getting a new forage-cap made, and in my delight at this purchase I paid no sort of heed to the political conversation which I heard all about me, nor, to tell the truth, did I understand much of it. My father went to return General Bonaparte's visit. They walked for a long time alone in the little garden of the hotel, while their staffs kept at a respectful distance. We saw them at one time vigorously gesticulating, at another talking more calmly; presently Bonaparte, coming close to my father with a coaxing air, took his arm in a friendly fashion. His motive, probably, was that the authorities who were in the courtyard and the many curious spectators who were crowding the neighbouring windows might say that General Marbot assented to General Bonaparte's plans. But this clever man never overlooked any means of reaching his end; some people he drew over, and wished to have it believed that he had also won to his side those whose sense of duty led them to resist him. Herein his success was wonderful.

My father came out from this second conversation even more thoughtful than from the first, and on entering the hotel he gave orders that we should proceed on the following day. But General Bonaparte was going to make a visit of inspection of the points in the neighbourhood of the town suitable for fortification, and all the post-horses had been engaged for him. For the moment I thought that my father would be angry, but he confined himself to saying: 'There's the beginning of omnipotence.' He gave orders that an effort should be made to hire some horses, so eager was he to get away from the town and to escape a spectacle which shocked him. No horses were to be found; thereupon Colonel Ménard, who was a native of the South, and knew the

country thoroughly, remarked that the road from Lyons to Avignon was terribly dilapidated, and that as there was every possibility that our carriages would get damaged, it would be much better to ship them on the Rhone, and descend the river in the midst of charming scenery. My father, who cared very little for the picturesque, would at any other time have rejected this suggestion; but as it gave him the chance of getting away a day sooner from the town of Lyons, where, under the existing circumstances, it was no pleasure to him to stay, he agreed to the journey by water. Colonel Ménard hired a large boat; two carriages were put on board, and very early the next morning we all embarked. It was very near being the death of us. As usual in autumn, the water was very low; the boat every moment kept touching the bottom and sticking fast, and there was considerable fear that she would go to pieces. We slept the first night at Saint-Péray, the next at Tain, so we took two days to descend as far as the mouth of the Drôme. After that we found much more water, and got along quickly; but about a quarter of a league above Port Saint-Esprit we were struck by such a furious mistral that the boatmen could not reach the bank. They lost their heads, and instead of rowing began to pray, the current and the fierce gale driving the boat all the time towards the bridge. We were on the point of being dashed against one of the piles of the bridge and swamped, when my father and the rest of us caught up the boathooks and held them forward just at the right moment, and so parried the shock. The recoil was so severe that it threw us all on to the seats, but the direction of the boat had been changed, and by almost miraculous good fortune it slipped under the arch. The boatmen recovered a little from their terror, and resumed after a fashion the navigation of their vessel; but the gale continued, and the two carriages catching the wind made it almost impossible to steer. Ultimately we were cast ashore on a large island about six leagues above Avignon. The prow of the boat ran deep into the sand, in such a way that it would be impossible to pull it out without a great many hands, and the vessel took such a list to one side that we

expected her every moment to fill. Some planks were placed between the boat and the shore, and by the help of a rope we all landed without accident, though not without danger. Though no rain fell it was impossible to think of re-embarking as long as the wind remained so high, so we began to explore the island. It was very large, and we thought at first uninhabited, but at last we discovered a farm. The kind people received us well; we were famishing, having only a little bread with us, and it was impossible to go on board to get more provisions. They told us that the isle was full of fowls, which they allowed to run wild and shot when they wanted them. My father was very fond of shooting, and just now was glad of a distraction, so we borrowed the peasants' guns, took pitchforks and sticks, and started off laughing to shoot fowls. They were not easy to get at, for they flew like pheasants, but we killed several and collected a good many eggs in the woods. On our return to the farm a great fire was lighted in the open. We established ourselves in a bivouac round it, while my father's servant, with the help of the farmer's wife, dressed the fowls and the eggs. We had a merry supper, and afterwards went to bed in the hay, for none of us had the courage to accept the beds which the kind peasants offered us. At daybreak came the boatmen with the news that the wind had fallen; peasants and boatmen all took pick and shovel, and after some hours of hard work they got the vessel afloat again. We continued our voyage to Avignon, and arrived there without further accident, though what we had undergone was improved by rumour till the report reached Paris that my father and all his suite had perished in the waters of the Rhone.

The entry into Avignon, especially by the river, is very picturesque. The old papal castle, the ramparts of the town, its many towers, and the castle of Villeneuve over against it compose a charming picture. At Avignon we found Madame Ménard and one of her nieces; we spent three days in the town, and visited the beautiful country in the neighbourhood, not omitting the fountain of Vaucluse. My father was in no hurry to go, for M. R—— had written to him that, owing to

the heat, which was still great in the South, he had been compelled to travel slowly, and there was no use in arriving before the horses. From Avignon we went on to Aix, but on reaching the bank of the Durance, which was then traversed in a ferry-boat, we found the river swollen beyond its banks to such an extent that it would be impossible to cross for five or six hours. We were consulting whether to return to Avignon, when the man who farmed the ferry, who was by way of being a gentleman, and owned a pretty country house on a height a few hundred yards from the bank, came and begged my father to rest there until his carriages could be got across. He accepted, in the hope that it would only be for a few hours; but it would seem that there had been a great storm in the mountains about the source of the Durance, for the river continued to rise all day. We were therefore compelled to accept the offer of shelter for the night which was very cordially made by the master of the house, and as the day was fine we spent the whole of it in strolling about. This episode of our voyage I found very agreeable.

Next morning the stream was running yet more fiercely, and our entertainer, who was a hot Republican, seeing from his knowledge of the river that we were fixed for another twenty-four hours, went off, without a word to us, to the little town of Cavaillon, two leagues away, and announced to the patriots of the neighbourhood that he had General Marbot staying with him. Then he returned in triumph to his mansion, and an hour later we saw a cavalcade arrive, composed of the stoutest patriots of Cavaillon, with a request that my father would kindly accept a banquet which they offered in the name of the chief men of a town always eminent for its Republican sentiments.

My father, who had no taste for honours of this kind, refused at first; but the citizens were so urgent with their representations that everything had been prepared and the guests assembled, that he yielded, and we set out for Cavaillon. The best hotel was adorned with garlands and lined with all the local rank and fashion. After endless compliments we sat down round a huge table covered with the

most elaborate dishes, especially ortolans, of which bird that country is a favourite haunt. There were vehement speeches against 'the enemies of liberty.' Numerous toasts were drunk, and we did not break up till ten o'clock—rather too late to return to Bompart. My father could not well leave his entertainers at the moment of rising from table, so he decided to sleep at Cavaillon, and the rest of the evening passed in pretty noisy conversation. Gradually the company dropped off home, and we were left alone. Next morning, on rising, M. Gault asked the landlord what was our share of last night's festivity, supposing it to be a picnic, at which each guest would pay for his own dinner. The man handed him a bill for 1,500 francs, the good patriots not having paid a mortal sou! We heard afterwards that some had expressed a wish to pay their share, but the great majority had pointed out that to do so would be an insult to General Marbot! Captain Gault was furious; but my father, after recovering from his first astonishment, shouted with laughter, and bade the landlord come for his money to Bompart. We returned thither at once, and said nothing about the affair to our host. His servants were handsomely vailed; and the Durance having fallen, we took the opportunity to cross it, and make our way to Aix. Though I was not old enough to discuss politics with my father, from things which I had heard him say, I was inclined to believe that his Republican views had in the past two years been much modified, and that some of the remarks made at the Cavaillon dinner had given them a final shock; but he never showed any annoyance on the subject of the so-called 'picnic.' On the contrary, he was much amused by the wrath of M. Gault, who kept saying, 'I do not wonder that those scamps ordered such quantities of ortolans, regardless of cost, and called for all those bottles of expensive wines.'

We slept at Aix, and pushed on to Nice. This was our last day of posting. As we crossed the lovely mountain and forest of the Esterel we met the colonel of the 1st Hussars, who was returning from the army to the depôt at Le Puy en Velay, with an escort of one officer and several troopers

leading broken-down horses. His name was M. Picart; he had been left in command of his regiment, though very seldom at the front, in consideration of his merits as an administrator; and he was constantly being sent to the depôt to fit out men and horses, which he forwarded to the combatant squadrons. On seeing him my father stopped his carriage and alighted; and, after presenting me to my colonel, took him aside and begged him to suggest a non-commissioned officer of good character and education who might become my mentor. The colonel named Sergeant Pertelay. My father took a note of the name, and we went on to Nice. There we found Major R—— installed in a first-rate hotel, with our carriages and horses in very good condition.

CHAPTER VI

THE town of Nice was full of troops, among them a squadron of my regiment, the 1st Hussars. In the colonel's absence the regiment was commanded by Major Muller, a brave officer, father of the poor adjutant of the 7th Hussars who was wounded at my side by a cannon-ball at Waterloo. On learning that the divisional commander had arrived, Major Muller waited on my father; and it was settled that after a few days' rest I should begin my service in the 7th troop, commanded by Captain Mathis, a meritorious officer, who became colonel under the Empire and major-general under the Restoration.

Kind as my father was to me, I held him in such awe that in his presence I was extremely shy. He fancied me even more so than I really was, and used to say that I ought to have been a girl, often calling me 'Miss Marcellin.' This vexed me a good deal, especially now that I was a hussar. It was in order to overcome this shyness that my father wished me to serve with my comrades. Although, as I have said, it was impossible to enter the army otherwise than through the ranks, my father might have attached me to his personal service, as my regiment formed part of his division; but besides the reason which I have given, he wanted me to learn to saddle and bridle my own horse and to clean my own accoutrements. If he had allowed his son to enjoy any privileges it would have produced a bad effect in the troop. I had already been favoured in getting admitted to the regiment without a long and wearisome apprenticeship at the depôt.

I passed several days with my father and his staff going over the beautiful country about Nice. When the time came

for me to join, my father directed Major Muller to send Sergeant Pertelay to him. Now you must know that there were in the regiment two brothers of this name, both sergeants, but quite unlike each other morally and physically. You might have thought that the author of 'Les Deux Philibert'[1] had taken his characters from these two men: the elder Pertelay being the wicked Philibert, the younger Pertelay the virtuous Philibert. It was the latter whom the colonel had intended to recommend as my mentor; but, being in a hurry, he had omitted when naming Pertelay to add 'junior.' Further, this Pertelay was not in the squadron at Nice, whereas the elder was actually in Troop 7, to which I was to belong. Major Muller therefore supposed that it was the elder brother whom the colonel had named to my father; and that this wild fellow had been selected in order to take the nonsense out of a mild and shy lad like myself. So he sent us Pertelay senior. This typical hussar of the old school was a hard drinker, a brawler, always ready for a quarrel and a fight; brave, moreover, to the point of rashness. He was absolutely ignorant of everything that did not concern his horse, his accoutrements, or his service in the field. Pertelay junior, on the other hand, was gentle, well-mannered, highly educated; and, being also a very handsome man and every whit as brave as his brother, he would certainly have got on fast had he not been killed, while still young, on the battle-field. However, to return to the elder. He came to my father's house, and what did we behold? A jolly ruffian—very well set up, I must admit—with his shako over his ear, his sabre trailing, his florid countenance divided by an enormous scar, moustaches half a foot long waxed and turned up to his ears, on his temples two long locks of hair plaited, which came from under his shako and fell on his breast, and withal such an air!—a regular rowdy air, heightened still further by his words, jerked out in the most barbarous French-Alsatian gibberish. This last peculiarity was no surprise to my father, for he knew that the 1st Hussars were the old Bercheny regiment, consisting formerly of nothing but

[1] A popular comedy, by L. F. Picard, first produced in 1815.

Germans. Indeed, down to 1793 the word of command used to be given in German, which was the language of most of the officers and the troopers, who were nearly all born in the provinces on the banks of the Rhine. What was a surprise, however, was the demeanour, the answers, and the swaggering manner of my mentor. Later on, indeed, I learnt that my father had had some hesitation in entrusting me to the hands of this fellow, but M. Gault pointed out that Colonel Picart had specified him as the best non-commissioned officer in the squadron, and so he resolved to give him a trial. Accordingly I followed Pertelay, who took my arm in an off-hand way, came to my room, showed me how to pack up my things, and brought me to a little barrack established in an old convent and occupied by a squadron of the 1st Hussars. He made me saddle and unsaddle a handsome little horse which my father had bought for me. Then he showed me how to dispose of my cloak and accoutrements, showed me, in short, all that was to be shown. When he had explained everything he bethought him that it was time to go to dinner; for my father, wishing me to take my meals with my mentor, had allowed us extra pay for this item. Pertelay brought me to a little inn, where the dining-room was full of hussars, grenadiers, and soldiers of all arms. Our dinner was served, and on the table was placed an enormous bottle of the strongest and roughest red wine, of which Pertelay poured me out a bumper. We clinked our glasses; my friend emptied his. I set mine down without putting it to my lips, for I had never drunk unmixed wine, and I did not like the smell of this. I confessed as much to my mentor, who straightway shouted in a stentorian voice, 'Waiter, lemonade for this lad—he never drinks wine.' Shouts of laughter rang through the whole room. I was much abashed, but I could not make up my mind to taste this wine, nor did I dare to ask for water, so I dined without drinking.

The apprenticeship to a soldier's life is at all times pretty rough; it was especially so at the time of which I am writing, and I had some disagreeable moments to pass. But what seemed to me intolerable was to be obliged to sleep with

another hussar, for the regulations at that time only allowed one bed for two soldiers. Non-commissioned officers alone had a bed to themselves. The first night which I passed in barracks I had just got into bed, when a strapping great hussar, who had come in an hour after the others, came up to the bed, and, seeing that there was someone there already, unhooked the lamp and put it under my nose to have a better look at me. As I watched him undressing I had no idea that he proposed to take his place by me, but I was soon undeceived when he said roughly, 'Make room, recruit.' Therewith he got into the bed, lay down so as to take up three-quarters of it, and set to work snoring in a high key. I found it impossible to sleep, chiefly by reason of the horrible smell which emanated from a great bundle placed by my comrade under the bolster to raise his head. I couldn't imagine what it could be. In order to find out I slipt my hand gently towards the object and discovered a leathern apron well impregnated with cobbler's wax. My amiable bedfellow was one of the regimental shoemaker's assistants. I was so disgusted that I got up, dressed, and went to the stable to sleep on a truss of straw. Next day I imparted my misfortune to Pertelay, who reported it to our sub-lieutenant. He happened to be a man of good breeding, by name Lesteinschneider (German for 'lapidary'). Under the Empire he became a colonel, and senior aide-de-camp to Bessières, and was killed. Understanding how disagreeable it must be to me to sleep with a shoemaker, he ordered me on his own responsibility a bed in the non-commissioned officers' room, which was a great comfort to me.

Although with the Revolution military costume had become slovenly, the 1st Hussars had always preserved theirs as correct as in the days when they were Bercheny. Save, therefore, for the physical dissimilarities imposed by nature, all the troopers were bound to get themselves up alike, and as the hussar regiments at that time wore not only a pig-tail but also long 'love locks,' locks on the temples, and had their moustaches turned up, everyone belonging to the corps was expected to have moustaches, pigtails, and locks. As I

had none of them, my mentor took me to the regimental barber, where I purchased a sham pigtail and locks. These were attached to my hair, which was already fairly long, for since my enlistment I had let it grow. I was embarrassed at first by this make-up, but in a few days I got used to it, and enjoyed it because I thought it gave me the air of an old hussar. With regard to moustaches the case was different. Of them I had no more than a girl, and as a beardless face would have spoilt the uniformity of the squadron, Pertelay, in conformity with the practice of the regiment, took a pot of blacking and with his thumb made two enormous hooks covering my upper lip and reaching almost to my eyes. At that time the shakoes had no peak, so it happened that during reviews or when I was doing vedette duty and was bound to remain perfectly motionless, the scorching rays of the Italian sun pouring down on to my face used to suck up the liquid part of the blacking with which my moustaches had been made, and the blacking as it dried drew my skin in a very unpleasant way. Still I did not so much as wink: I was a hussar; the word had a magical effect on me, and, besides, when I entered on a military career I thoroughly understood that my first duty was to conform to the regulations.

Before my father left Nice the news arrived of the overthrow of the Directory on the 18th Brumaire and the establishment of the Consulate. My father's opinion of the Directory had not been such as to make him regret its fall, but he feared that in the intoxication of power Bonaparte, when he had restored order in France, would not content himself with the modest title of consul, and predicted that before long he would want to make himself king. He was only wrong as to the title: in four years' time Napoleon made himself emperor. Whatever his presentiments may have been, my father rejoiced at being absent from Paris on the 18th Brumaire; if he had been there I think he would have vigorously opposed Bonaparte's enterprise. But being on service, at the head of a division in face of the enemy, he felt able to take refuge in the passive obedience of a soldier. He rejected the proposals which several generals and colonels

made to him to march on Paris at the head of their troops. 'Who,' he asked, 'will defend the frontier if we desert it? And what will become of France if the miseries of a civil war are added to our war against the foreigner?' By this caution he kept the excitement in check, but, at the same time, he none the less felt very strongly on the subject of the recent *coup d'état*. He adored his country, and would have wished to see her saved without being brought under the yoke of a tyrant.

My father's chief motive, as I have said, in making me go through my service in the ranks, was to get rid of my rather foolish schoolboy air, which my short stay in the world of Paris had not removed. He succeeded beyond his hopes, for, living in the middle of the boisterous hussars, and having for my tutor a kind of Pandour who laughed at all my follies, I learnt to suit my conduct to my company, and for fear of being laughed at for my shyness I became a perfect daredevil. I was not, however, as yet qualified to be admitted into a sort of brotherhood which, under the name of 'the gang,' drew its initiated from all the squadrons of the 1st Hussars. The 'gang' was composed of the most reckless and the bravest soldiers of the regiment; its members supported each other against all comers, especially in presence of the enemy. They called each other by the name of *loustic*,[1] and were to be known by means of a notch made with a knife in the first button of the row on the right side of the pelisse and the jacket. The officers knew of the existence of the gang, but as its greatest crimes were limited to the occasional looting of sheep and fowls, or playing tricks on the inhabitants, while, on the other hand, the *loustics* were always the first under fire, the chiefs winked at it. Feather-brain that I was, I was eager to be admitted into this society of roysterers; it seemed to me that it would give me a respectable position among my comrades; but it was all very well to frequent the fencing-school, to learn foil and broad-sword, pistol and carbine, to elbow out of the way everyone

[1] *Loustic* = 'joker'; German, *lustig*. The term seems to have been first in use in the Swiss regiments of the later Monarchy (Littré).

I met, to let my sabre trail, and wear my shako over one ear: the members of the gang looked upon me as a child and refused to admit me. However, an unforeseen adventure brought about my unanimous election, in the following way.

At that time the Army of Italy was occupying Liguria, extended on a front more than sixty leagues in length, its right on the Gulf of Spezia beyond Genoa, the centre at Finale, and the left on the Var—that is, the French frontier. We had, therefore, the sea in our rear, and were fronting towards Piedmont, which was occupied by the Austrian army, separated from us by the spur of the Apennines which extends from the Var to Gavi. It was a false position, for the French army was exposed to be cut in two, which actually happened some months later; but I will not anticipate. My father had been ordered to concentrate at Savona, and established his head-quarters in the bishop's palace; the infantry was distributed among the country towns and villages in the neighbourhood, to watch the valleys through which issue the roads leading to Piedmont. The 1st Hussars had come from Nice, and were bivouacking in a plain called La Madona. The enemy's outposts were at Dego, four or five leagues from us, on the reverse slope of the Apennines. The mountain-tops were covered with snow, while Savona and the neighbourhood enjoyed a mild temperature. Our bivouac would have been delightful if provisions had been more plentiful. But there was then no high road from Nice to Genoa; the English cruisers held the sea; and the army had to live on supplies brought on mules along the *Corniche*, or landed from such small coasters as could slip along unperceived. These precarious methods barely sufficed to provide the grain necessary for the daily bread of the troops. Happily, however, the country produces plenty of wine, which served to keep up the soldiers' spirits and make them bear their hardships more cheerfully. So one lovely day, as I was walking along the shore with friend Pertelay, he spied a public-house in a garden full of orange-trees and olives. Under these were tables, at which soldiers of all arms were

sitting, and he proposed that we should go in. I had not been able to get over my dislike of wine; but out of friendship I followed him.

I may mention that at this time a cavalry soldier's belt had no hook, so that when he went on foot he had to hold the scabbard of his sword in the left hand, letting the point trail on the ground. This made a clatter and gave a roystering air, which was quite enough to make me adopt the fashion. But, behold, as I entered the garden the end of my scabbard touched the foot of a gigantic horse-artilleryman who was taking his ease stretched out on his chair, his legs in front of him. The horse-artillery (or 'flying-artillery' as it was then called) had been formed, at the beginning of the Revolutionary wars, of volunteers from the grenadier companies; and the opportunity had been taken to get rid of some of the more disorderly from the regiments. The 'gallopers' were therefore renowned for their courage, and for their love of a quarrel no less. The man whom my sabre had touched said to me in a stentorian voice and a very majestic tone: 'You hussar, your sword trails far too much.' I was going on without taking any notice, when friend Pertelay, touching my elbow, whispered in a low tone: 'Answer him, "Come and pick it up."' I, to the gunner: "Come and pick it up.' 'That is easily done,' replied he. Pertelay, prompting me again: 'We have got to see that.' Thereupon the gunner —the Goliath, I might say, for he was all six feet high—sat upright with a threatening air. My mentor dashed between him and me. All the artillerymen in the garden at once took their comrade's part; but a crowd of hussars ranged up alongside of Pertelay and myself. Tempers grew hot; all shouted and spoke at once: I quite thought there would be a general scrimmage. The hussars, however, being two to one, were the calmer; and the artillerymen perceived that if swords were drawn they would get the worst of it. So at length the giant was brought to see that in touching his foot with the point of my sword I had in nowise insulted him, and that between us two things need go no further. But in the tumult an artillery bugler some twenty years old had been saying rude

things to me, and in my anger I had pushed him so roughly that he had fallen head foremost into a muddy ditch. So it was agreed that this lad and I should fight with sabres, and we left the garden, followed by all present. Behold us, then, close to the water's edge, on fine firm sands, ready for a bout with the steel. Pertelay knew that I was fairly good with the sabre, but still he gave me some advice as to the best method of attack, and fastened my sword-hilt to my hand with a large handkerchief which he wrapped round my arm.

Here I may mention that my father had a horror of duelling, based not only on his views as to the barbarism of the practice, but also on a recollection of his youthful days in the body-guard, when he had acted as second to a much-loved comrade who had been killed in single combat in a most futile cause. For whatever reason, his first step on assuming a command was to order the gendarmes to arrest and bring before him any soldiers whom they might catch crossing swords. The artillery bugler and I were well aware of this order; none the less had we thrown off our jackets and stood sabre in hand. I had my back to the town of Savona; my adversary faced it. Just as we were about to begin our fence, I saw the bugler leap to one side, catch up his jacket and bolt. 'Running away, coward?' I shouted, and was pursuing him, when a grip of iron seized my collar from behind. I turned, and found myself in the hands of eight or ten gendarmes. I knew then why my antagonist had bolted. The spectators had done the same, and were making off as fast as their legs could carry them, Master Pertelay among the number, in dire fear of being arrested and brought before the general.

There I was, disarmed and a prisoner! I slipped on my jacket and followed the gendarmes, with a pretty hang-dog look. I did not give my name, and they brought me to the bishop's palace, where my father lodged. He was at that moment with General (afterwards Marshal) Suchet, who had come to Savona to talk over some service matters with him; and they were walking in a gallery open to the court. The gendarmes brought me up, without a notion that I was the

general's son, and the corporal explained the reason of my arrest. My father, in his most severe manner, gave me a sharp reprimand, and at the end of his admonition said to the corporal, 'Take this hussar to the citadel.' I retired without a word, and without a suspicion on the part of General Suchet, who did not know me, that the scene to which he had been a witness had passed between father and son. He did not learn our relationship till the next day, and has often since then laughed over the story with me. On reaching the citadel, an old relic of the Genoese, standing near the harbour, I was shut up in a vast room lighted by a dormer looking towards the sea. Gradually I got over my excitement, and felt that I had deserved the reprimand which I had undergone. At the same time I thought more of having given pain to my father than of having disobeyed my commanding officer. I spent the rest of the day gloomily enough; and in the evening an old pensioner of the Genoese army brought me a jug of water, a piece of ammunition bread, and a truss of straw. I flung myself on it, unable to eat. Nor could I sleep; first, because I was too much upset, and, further, by reason of the evolutions of some big rats, who soon took possession of my bread. I was in the dark, brooding over my sorrows, when towards ten o'clock I heard the bolts of my prison drawn, and behold, my father's faithful old servant, Spire. From him I learnt that after I had been sent to the citadel Colonel Ménard, Captain Gault, and all my father's officers had interceded for me, that the general had agreed to pardon me, and had sent him, Spire, to fetch me, and to bear the order for my liberation to the governor of the fort. I was taken before this governor, General Buget, an excellent man, who had lost an arm in battle, and who knew me, and had a great regard for my father. He returned me my sword, and thought it his duty to give me a long lecture. I listened patiently enough, but with the thought that I had got to have another, much more severe, from my father. This I did not feel that I had courage to endure, and I resolved to get off it if I could. Well, we were escorted past the gates of the citadel, and, as the night was dark, Spire

walked in front of me with a lantern. As we made our way through the narrow and tortuous streets, the good man, in his delight at bringing me back, enlarged upon all the comforts that awaited me at head-quarters. 'But you know,' he added, 'you may expect a fine scolding from your father.' This last remark fixed my resolution, and in order to leave time for my father's wrath to cool, I decided to return to the bivouac at Madona, and to keep out of his presence for several days. I could, no doubt, have got away without playing any trick on poor Spire; but I was afraid that he might pursue me by the light of the lantern which he carried, so with a kick I sent it flying ten yards away, and ran for my life. As the good man groped about after his lantern I could hear him exclaim, 'You little scamp, I'll tell your father! I'm blessed if he was not quite right to put you with those Bercheny rascals. A fine school for a scapegrace!'

I wandered for a while through the deserted streets, and at length found the road to La Madona and reached the bivouac of my regiment. All the hussars thought I was in prison; but as soon as I was recognised by the firelight they came round me, asking questions, and shouting with laughter when I related how I got away from the trusty servant charged to bring me to the general. The members of the 'gang' were especially delighted with this sign of a resolute character, and unanimously agreed to admit me into their society. They were just planning an expedition for that very night: to go to the gates of Dego, and carry off a herd of cattle belonging to the Austrian army. The French generals and corps-commanders were obliged to feign ignorance of the excursions which the soldiers made beyond the outposts, since there was no other way of procuring a regular supply of victuals. Thus in every regiment the bravest men had formed marauding bands, who had a wonderful knack of discovering the places where the enemy's victualling went forward, and of getting hold, by cunning or boldness, of his stores.

A scoundrelly horse-dealer had given information to the 'gang' of the 1st Hussars that a herd of cattle which he had

sold to the Austrians was parked in a meadow a quarter of a league from Dego. Accordingly, sixty hussars, armed only with their carbines, started off to lift them. We went for several leagues through the mountains by side-roads of the most fearful kind so as to avoid the highway, and surprised five Croats who were on guard over the herd asleep in a shed. Lest they should give the alarm to the garrison of Dego, we tied them up and left them there, carrying off the herd without having to strike a blow. By the time we got back to our bivouac we were tired, but highly pleased at the smart trick we had played the enemy, to say nothing of having got our victuals. I have told this story to show the state of destitution into which the Army of Italy had fallen, and how disorganised troops must get when left to themselves to such an extent that their officers not only tolerate expeditions of this kind but profit by the victuals so obtained, affecting all the while to be ignorant whence they have come.

CHAPTER VII

With the good fortune which attended my military career, I avoided altogether the grade of corporal, passing at a leap from the ranks to the position of sergeant, which befell in this wise. To the left of my father's division was stationed that of General Séras, with its head-quarters at Finale. This division occupied that part of Liguria where the mountains are steepest, and consequently consisted of infantry only, there being no room for cavalry to move, save in very small detachments, in the few passes which here connect the Mediterranean coast with Piedmont. General Séras, having received orders from the commander-in-chief, General Championnet, to push a reconnaissance into the valleys beyond Monte Santo Giacomo, wrote to my father begging him to lend him for this expedition a detachment of fifty hussars. My father naturally agreed, and appointed Lieutenant Lesteinschneider to command the detachment of which my section formed part. We started from La Madona to go to Finale; the only road along the coast then was a very bad one, called La Corniche. The lieutenant happened to dislocate his foot in consequence of a fall from his horse, and the next in rank to him was Sergeant Canon, a fine young man, well educated, possessing plenty of ability, and still more assurance. On the following day General Séras led his force over Monte San Giacomo, where we bivouacked in the snow. We were pretty certain the next day, if we advanced, to come in contact with the enemy; but in what strength should we find them? The general had no notion; his orders were to reconnoitre the position of the Austrians in this part of the line, but on no account to engage if he found them in force. It had struck him that, in advancing

his infantry division through a mountain country where a column often cannot be perceived until one comes face to face with it at the turn of a gorge, he might, against his will, be drawn into a serious action against superior forces and compelled to execute a dangerous retreat. He resolved, therefore, to march cautiously, and to send forward to two or three leagues' distance a detachment which might explore the country, and, above all, make some prisoners from whom he could hope to get better information than the peasants were either able or willing to give. But feeling also that an infantry detachment would be in an awkward position if he sent it too far away, and that, moreover, men on foot would not be able to bring the desired intelligence quickly enough, the task of discovery and exploration was assigned to the fifty hussars. As the country is very much broken, he handed a map to our sergeant, and gave him full instructions, both in writing and *vivâ voce*, in presence of the detachment. Two hours before daylight he sent us off, repeating that we must march, without fail, until we touched the enemy's outposts, from which he was exceedingly anxious that we might be able to bring away some prisoners.

M. Canon's dispositions were perfect. He sent out a small advance-guard, covered his flank with scouts, and took, in short, all the precautions customary in guerilla warfare. Two leagues from camp we came to a large inn; our sergeant questioned the innkeeper, and was informed that a good hour further on we should find an Austrian corps, the strength of which he could not state. He knew, however, that the leading regiment was one of very ill-conditioned hussars, who had maltreated sundry of the inhabitants. With this information we continued our march, but we had hardly gone a few hundred paces when M. Canon began to writhe on his horse, saying that he was in horrible pain, and that he could not go any farther, but must hand over the command of the detachment to Sergeant Pertelay the elder, the next in seniority to himself. Pertelay, however, remarked that, being an Alsatian, he could not read French, and consequently would be unable to make any use of the map or understand

the general's written instructions, so he would not take command. All the other sergeants, old Bercheny men, with no more tincture of letters than Pertelay, refused on similar grounds; the corporals the same. In vain did I offer, in order to induce them, to read the general's instructions, and to point out our route on the map to any sergeant who would take the command; they repeated their refusal, and, to my great surprise, all these veterans answered: 'Take command yourself; we will follow you and obey you implicitly.' All the detachment expressed the same desire, and as it was clear to me that if I declined we should not get any farther, and that the honour of the regiment would suffer—for in some way or other the order of General Séras would have to be executed or his division might perhaps come into serious trouble—I accepted the command after having asked M. Canon whether he felt fit to resume it. On this he renewed his complaints, left us, and returned to the inn. I must admit that I believed him to be really indisposed; but the men of the detachment, who knew him better, indulged in some very insulting banter with regard to him.

I may, I think, say without boasting that nature has allotted to me a fair share of courage; I will even add that there was a time when I enjoyed being in danger, as my thirteen wounds and some distinguished services prove, I think, sufficiently. When, therefore, I took command of the fifty men who had come under my orders in such unusual circumstances, a mere trooper as I was and seventeen years old, I resolved to show my comrades that if I had not yet much experience or military talent, I at least possessed pluck. So I resolutely put myself at their head and marched on in what we knew was the direction of the enemy. We had been some time on the way, when our scouts perceived a peasant trying to hide himself; they quickly captured him and brought him in. I questioned him; it appeared that he came from four or five leagues off, and averred that he had not met any Austrian troops. I was sure that he was lying through fear or through cunning, for we must be very near the enemy's cantonments. I remembered to have read

in the *Parfait Partisan*, of which my father had given me a copy, that in order to get information from the inhabitants of a country which one is passing through in time of war one must sometimes frighten them; so I put on a big voice, and, trying to give my youthful countenance a ferocious air, I cried: 'What, you scamp! You have just come through a country occupied by a strong Austrian army corps, and you pretend to have seen nothing? You're a spy. Here, shoot him on the spot!' I ordered four hussars to dismount, giving them a sign that they were to do the man no harm. The man, seeing himself in the hands of troopers who had just cocked their carbines, was in such a fright that he swore to tell me all he knew. He was the servant of a convent, and was charged with a letter to some relations of the prior; he had been ordered if he met the French not to tell them where the Austrians were, but since he was forced to confess he informed us that at a distance of a league from us several of the enemy's regiments were quartered in the villages, while there were a hundred Barco Hussars in a hamlet which we saw close at hand. When questioned as to the kind of guard which the hussars kept, the peasant replied that they had in advance of the houses a grand guard consisting of a dozen dismounted men posted in a garden surrounded by hedges, and that at the moment when he had come through the hamlet the rest of the hussars were getting ready to water their horses in a little pond at the further side of the houses.

Having got this information, I made my plans at once. I would avoid passing in front of the grand guard, who, being entrenched behind their hedges, were safe from a cavalry attack, while the fire of their carbines might kill some of my men and give warning of the approach of the French. I must therefore turn the hamlet, reach the watering-place, and fall upon the enemy unawares. But how was I to get round unperceived? I ordered the peasant to guide us, making a circuit, and promised to let him go as soon as we were at the other side of the hamlet. However, he was not willing to march, so I made one hussar take him by the collar while another held the muzzle of a pistol to his ear, and he had to do

as he was told. He guided us very well; our movement was masked by high hedges. We turned the village successfully, and perceived at the edge of the little pond the Austrian squadron quietly watering their horses. All the troopers had their arms with them, as is customary with outposts, but the officers had neglected a very essential precaution, namely, to allow only a certain number of horses to be unbridled and to drink at once, and to send the sections into the water in succession, so that half may always be on the bank ready to repulse an enemy. Trusting in the distance of the French and the vigilance of the post placed in advance of the village, the enemy's commander had thought it unnecessary to take this precaution, which was fatal to him.

At five hundred paces from the little pond I let our guide go; he made off as fast as his legs would carry him; while I, sabre in hand, and forbidding my comrades to shout before they were engaged, dashed at full gallop on the enemy's hussars. They did not catch sight of us till the moment before we were at the edge of the pond. The banks were almost everywhere too steep for the horses to climb, the only practicable approach being at the spot where the villagers drew their water, where there was a pretty wide opening. But at this point more than a hundred troopers were massed, all having their bridles over their arm, and their carbines in the buckets—so perfectly at their ease that some were singing. Their surprise may be imagined when I first attacked them with a carbine-fire which killed several, wounded many, and knocked over a great number of horses. They were thrown into utter confusion, in spite of which the captain, rallying the men who were next the bank, forced his way out, and opened upon us a fire which, though ill-sustained, wounded two men. They then charged us; but Pertelay having slain the captain with a sabre-cut, they were rolled back into the pond. Some in their efforts to escape the fire reached the other bank; many lost their footing, and a good number of men and horses were drowned, while those of the Austrian troopers who got across from the other side of the pond, not being able to get their horses up the bank,

abandoned them, and, clambering up by help of some trees, fled in disorder across the fields. At the sound of fighting the grand guard hurried up. We met them with the sabre and put them to flight also. Meanwhile some thirty of the enemy were still in the pond; but fearing to urge their horses forward, when they saw that the only place where a landing could be effected was in our hands, they called out that they surrendered. I accepted, and as they came ashore made them lay down their arms. Most of the men and horses were wounded; but, wishing to take away a trophy of our victory, I chose seventeen troopers and the same number of horses who were not much injured, and placed them in the middle of my detachment. Then I left the other Barcos to themselves, and made off at a gallop, turning the village again.

It was just as well that I did retreat promptly, for, as I had foreseen, the fugitives had given the alarm in the neighbouring cantonments, which had already been put on the alert by the musketry fire. All stood to their arms, and half an hour later there were more than 1,500 cavalry on the banks of the little pond, and several thousand infantry close behind. But our wounded were able to gallop, and by that time we were a couple of leagues away. We halted a moment on the top of a hill to dress wounds, and laughed a good deal to see in the distance several columns starting on our tracks. We knew quite well that they would not catch us, because, fearing a possible ambush, they were advancing very slowly and feeling their way; so that we were quite out of danger. I told Pertelay to take the two best mounted hussars and gallop forward to tell General Séras the result of our mission; then I dressed my detachment carefully, and with the prisoners in the middle, well guarded, I trotted easily along the road to the inn. It is impossible to describe the joy of my comrades and the congratulations which they addressed to me as we went along. It was all summed up in the words which to their mind expressed the height of eulogy: 'You thoroughly deserve to belong to the Bercheny Hussars, the first regiment in the world.'

What, meanwhile, had been passing at San Giacomo? After waiting for some hours, General Séras, impatient for news, perceived from the heights some smoke on the horizon; his aide-de-camp, laying his ear on a drum placed upon the ground, was able, by this common military artifice, to hear the sound of distant musketry. The general became uneasy, and, feeling sure that the cavalry detachment must be engaged with the enemy, took a regiment of infantry and went forward as far as the inn. There he saw a hussar's horse in the shed, hitched up to the rack; Sergeant Canon's, in fact. The innkeeper appeared, and from him the general learnt that the sergeant in command of the hussars had got no farther than the inn, where he had been for some hours in the dining-room. The general entered, and found M. Canon asleep by the fire, with a huge ham, two empty bottles, and a cup of coffee in front of him. The poor sergeant was roused from his slumbers, and tried once more to plead the excuse of sudden indisposition. But the accusing remains of the mighty meal he had just eaten destroyed all belief in his malady, and General Séras was pretty rough with him. His wrath was increased by the thought that a detachment of fifty cavalry, entrusted to the command of a common trooper, had probably been destroyed by the enemy. At that moment Pertelay and his two hussars galloped up, announcing our triumph, and our immediate return with seventeen prisoners. As in spite of this happy result of our expedition the general continued to heap reproaches on Canon, Pertelay said with rough ardour, 'Do not scold him, general; he is such a coward that, if he had led us, we were bound to fail.' This way of putting the matter naturally did not improve poor M. Canon's already awkward position; the general put him under arrest, and degraded him on the spot, having his stripes torn off in presence of the regiment and the fifty hussars; then, turning to me, who had just come up, and not knowing my name, he said: 'You have performed admirably a duty which is usually entrusted only to officers. I am sorry that, as a general of division, I have not the power to appoint you sub-lieutenant; I will, how-

ever, ask your promotion to that rank of the commander-in-chief. Meanwhile, I make you sergeant.' He ordered his aide-de-camp to announce my promotion formally to the detachment. In order to do this, the aide-de-camp had to ask my name; and then General Séras learned for the first time that I was the son of his colleague General Marbot. I was very glad of this adventure, because it would prove to my father that favour had nothing to do with my promotion.

CHAPTER VIII

THE information which General Séras got from the prisoners having determined him to advance the next day, he sent orders to his division to descend from the heights of San Giacomo, and to bivouac that same night near the inn. The prisoners were forwarded to Finale. The horses were by right the property of the hussars; they were all good horses, but, according to the existing custom, which was established in order to benefit ill-mounted officers, a *prize* horse was never sold for more than five louis. It was an established price, and paid in cash. The sale began as soon as the tents were pitched; General Séras, his staff officers, and the colonels and majors of the regiments soon carried off our seventeen horses, which brought the sum of 85 louis. This was handed over to my detachment, and the hussars, who had received no pay for more than six months, were delighted with this windfall, the merit of which they ascribed to me. I had some pieces of gold on me, so, in order to pay my footing as a sergeant, I not only refused to take my share of the purchase-money of the horses, but I bought from the inn-keeper three sheep, a gigantic cheese, and a cask of wine, with which my detachment had a blow-out. This was one of the happiest days of my life; it was the 10th Frimaire, year 8.

On the next and following days the division of General Séras had several little engagements with the enemy, during which I continued to command my fifty hussars, doing scout duty, to the general's satisfaction. In his report to General Championnet General Séras praised my conduct in stately terms, and reported it also to my father; so that when, a few days later, I brought my detachment back to Savona, my

father received me with every sign of affection. I was in raptures. When I rejoined our bivouac where the regiment was all again assembled, the troopers of my detachment who had got there before me related what we had done, always giving me the lion's share of the success; so I was received with acclamation by officers and soldiers, as well as by my new comrades the non-commissioned officers, who presented me with my sergeant's stripes. That day I saw, for the first time, Pertelay junior, who was just back from Genoa, where he had been for some months on special service. I made great friends with this excellent man, and was sorry that I had not had him for mentor at the beginning of my career, for he gave me good advice, which made me quieter, and caused me to break off my connection with the 'gang.'

The commander-in-chief, having in view certain operations in the interior of Piedmont, in the direction of Cuneo and Mondovi, and being very short of cavalry, directed my father to send him the 1st Hussars. As a matter of fact, we could stay no longer at La Madona, for want of forage. I took leave of my father with much regret, and departed with the regiment. We followed the Corniche as far as Alberga, crossed the Apennines, in spite of the snow, and reached the fertile plains of Piedmont. The commander-in-chief fought a series of actions in the neighbourhood of Fossano, Novi, and Mondovi, with varying success.

In some of these fights I had occasion to see Brigadier-General Macard, a soldier of fortune, who had been carried by the whirlwind of the Revolution, almost without intermediate steps, from the rank of trumpet-major to that of general officer. He was an excellent specimen of the officers who were called into existence by chance and their own courage, and who, while they displayed a very genuine valour before the enemy, were none the less unfitted by their want of education for filling exalted positions. He was chiefly remarkable for a very quaint peculiarity. Of colossal size and extraordinary bravery, this singular person, when he was about to charge at the head of his troops, invariably cried, 'Look here! I'm going to dress like a beast.' There-

with he would take off his coat, his vest, his shirt, and keep on nothing except his plumed hat, his leather breeches, and his boots. Stripped thus to the waist, General Macard offered to view a chest almost as shaggy as a bear's, which gave him a very strange appearance. When he had once got on what he very truly called his beast's clothing, General Macard would dash forward recklessly, sabre in hand, and swearing like a pagan, on the enemy's cavalry. But he very seldom got at them, for at the sight of this giant, half naked, hairy all over, and in such a strange outfit, who was hurling himself at them and uttering the most fearful yells, his opponents would bolt on all sides, scarcely knowing if they had a man to deal with or some strange wild animal.

General Macard was, as might be expected, completely ignorant, which sometimes caused great amusement to the better-educated officers under his command. One day one of these came to ask leave to go into the neighbouring town to order himself a pair of boots. 'By Jove!' said the general, 'that will suit well; as you are going to a shoemaker, just come here and take my measure and order me a pair too.' The officer, much surprised, replied that he could not take his measure, as, never having been a shoemaker, he had not the least idea how to set about it. 'What!' cried the general, 'I sometimes see you pass whole days looking at the mountains, pencilling and drawing lines, and when I ask you what you are doing, you answer that you are measuring the mountains; well, if you can measure objects more than a league away from you, what do you mean by telling me that you cannot take my measure for a pair of boots when you have got me under your hand? Come, take my measure without any more ado.' The officer assured him that it was impossible; the general insisted, got angry, began to swear; and it was only with great difficulty that other officers, attracted by the noise, succeeded in bringing this ridiculous scene to an end. The general never would understand how an officer who measured the mountains could be unable to measure a man for a pair of boots.

You must not think from this anecdote that all the

general officers of the Army of Italy were of the same sort as brave General Macard; far from it. It included a great number of men distinguished for their education and their manners, but at this period it still contained several commanders who, as I have just said, were out of place in the upper ranks of the army. They were gradually eliminated.

The 1st Hussars took part in all the combats which at this time were fought in Piedmont, and went near to lose considerably in its encounters with the Austrian heavy cavalry. After several marches and counter-marches and a succession of small affairs almost every day, General Championnet, having brought up the centre and the left of his army between Cuneo and Mondovi on the 10th Nivose, attacked several divisions of the enemy. The fight took place in a plain intersected with low hills and clumps of wood. The 1st Hussars attached to General Beaumont's brigade were placed at the extreme right of the French army. As you are aware, the number of soldiers and officers comprising a squadron is fixed by the regulations. Our regiment, having suffered in the preceding affairs, could only put three squadrons in line that day instead of four; but there remained some thirty men as supernumeraries, among them five non-commissioned officers, including myself and the brothers Pertelay. We were formed in two sections, commanded by the brave and intelligent Pertelay junior. General Beaumont, who knew his capacity, directed him to scout on the right flank of the army, giving him no special instruction, but orders to act as seemed best under the circumstances. We therefore left the regiment and went to search the country. Meanwhile a brisk combat took place between the two forces. After an hour we were falling back on our main body without having met anything on the flank, when Pertelay perceived in face of us, and consequently on the extreme left of the enemy's line, a battery of eight pieces, whose fire was doing much execution in the French ranks. With unpardonable imprudence this Austrian battery, with a view of getting better aim, had been brought up to a little plateau seven or eight hundred paces in advance of the infantry division to

which it belonged. The commander of the artillery believed himself to be quite safe, thinking that, as the point which he occupied commanded the whole French line, if any force was detached to attack him, he would perceive it in time to fall back upon the Austrian line. He had not considered that a little clump of trees very near his position might conceal a body of French. It did not as yet contain any; but Pertelay resolved to lead his section thither, and thence to charge upon the Austrian battery. To conceal his movement from the enemy's gunners he acted on the well-known principle that in war no one takes any notice of a solitary horseman. His design, as he explained it to us, was to send us individually round by a hollow road until, one after another, we should get behind the wood, which was to the left of the enemy's battery; thence we were to make a dash upon it all at once without any fear of his shot, seeing that we should come up on the flank of the guns; we should capture these, and bring them to the French army. The movement was executed without being perceived by the Austrian gunners. We went off one by one, and by a circuitous march reached the rear of the little wood, where we re-formed our section. Young Pertelay put himself at our head; we passed through the wood and dashed, sabre in hand, on the enemy's battery, just as it was pouring a terrible fire upon our troops. We sabred some of the gunners, the remainder hid under the ammunition wagons, where our swords could not reach them.

Pertelay's instructions were neither to kill nor wound the drivers, but to force them at the sword's point to push their horses on and to draw the guns as far as the French line. This order was satisfactorily carried out with regard to six pieces, the drivers remaining mounted and following our injunctions. But those of the other two guns, whether through fright or determination, dismounted from their horses. The hussars might pull the animals by the bridles as they would, they could not be got to move. The nearest battalions of the enemy were coming up at the double to support their battery; minutes were like hours for us. At length Pertelay, satisfied with having captured six guns, gave orders to abandon the

others and to gallop in with those we had taken upon our own army. Prudent as this step was, it proved fatal to our gallant leader; for hardly had we begun our retreat when the gunners and their officers, emerging from below the ammunition wagons which had protected them from our swords, loaded with canister the two guns which we had not been able to carry off, and sent a hail of missiles into our backs.

You can imagine that thirty troopers, six guns harnessed each to six horses and driven by three drivers, marching in loose order, presents a wide surface, so nearly every missile told. We had two sergeants and several troopers killed or wounded, and one or two of the drivers; several horses, also, were disabled—so much so that the greater number of the teams were thrown into disorder and could get no farther. Pertelay, with the most perfect coolness, gave orders to cut the traces of the killed and disabled horses, to replace the killed and wounded drivers by hussars, and to go forward as fast as we could; but the few minutes which we lost in carrying out this order had been utilised by the commander of the Austrian battery. He let us have a second volley of canister, which caused us fresh losses; but our blood was up and we were resolved not to abandon the six guns which we had captured; we again succeeded in patching everything up as well as we could and in resuming our march. We were almost touching the French line, and were beyond the range of canister, when our enemy changed his projectile and sent two round-shots at us, one of which broke poor Pertelay's back.

Meanwhile, our attack on the Austrian battery and its result had been perceived by the French army and the generals ordered the lines to advance. The enemy recoiled, which allowed the remains of our detachment to return to the ground where our poor comrades had fallen. Nearly a third of the number had been killed or wounded. At the beginning of the action there had been five non-commissioned officers; three had perished; there remained only the elder Pertelay and myself. He, poor fellow, had been wounded, and was in still greater pain of mind than of body, for he adored his brother; and we also keenly regretted him. While

we were doing the last duties by him and removing the wounded, General Championnet came up with General Suchet, his chief of the staff. The commander-in-chief had seen the exploit of our battalion. He called us together beside the six guns which we had just taken and gave us the greatest praise for the courage with which we had succeeded in ridding the army of a battery that had been causing great damage. He added that in order to reward us for having thus saved a great number of lives and contributed to the success of the day, he wished to use the power given to him by a recent decree of the First Consul instituting arms of honour, and that he granted to the detachment three swords of honour and a sub-lieutenancy, authorizing us at the same time ourselves to name those who should receive these rewards. More keenly did we then regret the loss of the younger Pertelay, so well fitted to be an officer. The swords of honour, which three years later entitled their wearers to the Cross of the Legion of Honour, fell to the elder Pertelay, a corporal, and a trooper. Then came the naming of the one of us who was to have a sub-lieutenancy; all my comrades pronounced my name, and the commander-in-chief, remembering what General Séras had written to him about my conduct at San Giacomo, appointed me sub-lieutenant. I had only been sergeant a month. At the same time I must admit that in the attack and capture of the guns I had done no more than my comrades; but, as I have already said, none of these worthy Alsatians felt himself fit to command as an officer, so they unanimously named me, and the commander-in-chief was kind enough to take account of the proposal in my favour which General Séras had made. I may say, too, that possibly he was glad to do what would please my father. At all events this was the view that my father took of my rapid promotion, for, as soon as he heard of it, he wrote forbidding me to accept it. I obeyed, but as he had written to the same effect to General Suchet, the chief of the staff, and the latter had answered that the commander-in-chief would certainly be hurt if one of his divisional generals claimed to disapprove a nomination which he had made in virtue of powers conferred on him by the

Government, my father permitted me to accept, and I was gazetted sub-lieutenant on the 10th Nivose, year 7 (December 1799).

I was one of the last officers promoted by General Championnet. Being unable to hold his position in Piedmont in presence of a superior force, he was compelled to retreat across the Apennines and bring the army back into Liguria. Such was his grief at seeing a portion of his troops disband because he was no longer given the means of provisioning, that he died on the 25th of Nivose, fifteen days after he had made me an officer. My father, being the senior general of division, became provisionally commander-in-chief of the Army of Italy, with his head-quarters at Nice. He returned thither, and with all haste sent back into Provence what little cavalry still remained, for there was no longer any store of forage in Liguria. The 1st Hussars therefore returned to France, but my father kept me with him to act as aide-de-camp.

During our stay at Nice my father received orders from the Ministry of War to take up the command of the advanced guard of the Army of the Rhine, whither Colonel Ménard, as his chief of the staff, was to follow him. We were all very much satisfied with this new post, for the Army of Italy had become so demoralised by want of supplies that it seemed impossible to maintain our position in Liguria. Nor was my father sorry to get away from an army that was breaking up, and seemed about to tarnish its laurels by a shameful retreat, the result of which would be to throw it back behind the Var. He made ready, therefore, to depart as soon as General Masséna should arrive to replace him, and he sent M. Gault to Paris in order to buy maps and make the necessary preparations for our campaign on the Rhine. But destiny had decided otherwise, and my poor father's grave was marked out on the soil of Italy.

Masséna arrived to find but the shadow of an army. The troops, unpaid, almost unclad and unshod, were receiving only quarter rations, and dying of starvation or epidemic sickness, the result of privations. The hospitals were full, and medicine was lacking. Bands of soldiers, even whole

regiments, were every day quitting their posts and making for the bridge over the Var. They forced their way into France, and scattered about Provence, declaring themselves ready to return to their duty if they were fed. The generals had no power against such a mass of misery; every day their discouragement grew, and they were all asking for leave or resigning on the ground of illness. Masséna had, indeed, hoped to be joined in Italy by several of the generals who had been taking part in the defeat of the Russians in Switzerland: among them by Soult, Oudinot, and Gazan. But none of these had as yet come, and the pressing need must be met.

Masséna, who was born at Turbia, a township in the little principality of Monaco, was the wiliest of Italians. He was not acquainted with my father, but at first sight he judged him to be a man of magnanimous nature, above all things patriotic. In order to get him to stay, therefore, he approached him on his most sensitive side, appealing to his generosity and love of his country, and pointing out how much more to his honour it would be to stay with the Army of Italy in its misfortunes than to go to the Rhine where things were prosperous. He offered, moreover, if my father would stay, to take upon himself all responsibility for his neglect of orders. My father was over-persuaded, and, not liking to leave the new commander-in-chief while things were in confusion, agreed to stay. He made no doubt that Colonel Ménard, his friend, and chief of the staff, would follow his example and decline to serve on the Rhine; but here he was mistaken. Colonel Ménard, though assured that there would be no difficulty in getting the order revoked, held himself bound to obey it, and lost no time in reaching Paris, where he obtained the post of chief of the staff to General Lefebvre. My father felt his defection keenly. The post he had held was filled by Colonel Sacleux, an excellent man and good soldier, of a kindly but grave and serious disposition. His secretary was a young man named Colindo, son of one Trepano, a banker at Parma, who became an excellent friend of mine. Spire was left at Nice with the bulk of the baggage, and my father repaired to Genoa, to take up the command of

the three divisions composing the left wing. He lodged in the Centurione Palace till the end of the winter 1799–1800.

At the beginning of the following spring my father learnt that Masséna had given the command of the right wing to Soult, who had just arrived. At the same time he received orders to return to Savona and resume the command of his old division, the third. Though sorely hurt at this supersession by an officer much his junior, he complied with the new arrangements.

Meanwhile great events were preparing in Italy. Masséna had received reinforcements, and re-established some measure of order in the army. The famous campaign of 1800, which led to the siege of Genoa and the battle of Marengo, was about to open.

CHAPTER IX

As soon as the snow had melted on the mountains which lay between the two armies, the Austrians attacked. Their first efforts were directed against the third division of the right wing, with the view of separating it from the centre and the left and hurling it back on Genoa. At the commencement of hostilities my father and Colonel Sacleux sent all non-combatants to that city, Colindo among the number. For my part, I was over head and ears in happiness. The animating sight of troops on the march, the clatter of artillery movements, roused the desire which is always in a young soldier's heart of taking part in warlike operations. I was far from suspecting how terrible a war this would be, and how costly to myself.

My father's division, briskly attacked by a superior force, held for two days the famous position of Cadibone and Montenotte; but finally, being in danger of having its flank turned, it was forced to retreat on Voltri, and then on Genoa, where, with the other two divisions of the right wing, it was shut up.

I could hear the generals who knew the state of the case deploring the necessity of separating ourselves from the centre and the left wing, but at that time I knew so little of the principles of war that it in no way affected me. I understood well enough that we had been beaten, but as I had with my own hand captured an officer of the Barco Hussars and fastened his plume with much pride to the headstall of my horse, I felt as if this trophy gave me some resemblance to a knight of the Middle Ages coming home laden with the spoils of the infidels. My boyish vanity was soon brought down by a terrible catastrophe. During the retreat, just as my father

was giving me an order to carry, he received a ball in the left leg, the leg in which he had before been wounded with the Army of the Pyrenees. The shock was so great that he must have fallen from his horse if he had not leant upon me. I got him away from the field of battle; his wound was dressed, and when I saw his blood flow I began to cry. He tried to soothe me, and said that a soldier ought to have stronger nerves. We carried him to Genoa and placed him in the Centurione Palace, which he had occupied in the previous winter. Our three divisions entered Genoa; the Austrians blockaded the place by land, and the English by sea.

The courage fails me to describe what the garrison and population of Genoa had to suffer during the two months which this memorable siege lasted. The ravages of famine, war, typhus were enormous. Out of 16,000 men, the garrison lost 10,000; every day seven or eight hundred corpses of the inhabitants, of every age, sex, and class, were picked up in the streets and buried in an immense trench filled with quicklime behind the church of Carignan. The number of victims reached more than 30,000, nearly all starved to death.

In order to realise to what extent the dearth of food was felt among the inhabitants, you must know that the old Genoese Government, to keep the population in check, had from time immemorial claimed a monopoly of grain, flour, and bread. The bread was baked in an immense building guarded by cannon and soldiers, so that whenever the Doge or the Senate wished to prevent or punish a revolt they had only to close the state bakeries and subdue the people by famine. Although at the time of which I speak the Genoese Constitution had undergone much change, and the aristocracy had lost nearly all its authority, there still was not a single private bakehouse, and the old custom of making the bread in the state ovens continued. Well, these public ovens, which habitually provided food for a population of more than 120,000 souls, remained closed for forty-five days out of the sixty which the siege lasted. Rich no more than poor had the means of obtaining bread; the small quantity

of dried vegetables and rice which was in the hands of the dealers had been bought up at enormous prices at the very beginning of the siege. The troops alone received a miserable ration of a quarter of a pound of horseflesh and a quarter of a pound of what was called bread—a horrible compound of damaged flour, sawdust, starch, hair powder, oatmeal, linseed, rancid nuts, and other nasty substances, to which a little solidity was given by the admixture of a small portion of cocoa. Each loaf, moreover, was held together by little bits of wood, without which it would have fallen to powder. General Thiébault in his journal of the siege compares this bread to peat mingled with oil.

For five-and-forty days neither bread nor meat was publicly sold; the richest inhabitants were able, but only during the first part of the siege, to obtain a little codfish, figs, and other dried provisions, as well as some sugar. Oil, wine, and salt never failed; but of what use are these without solid food? All the dogs and cats in the town were eaten; rats fetched a high price. At length the misery grew so terrible that whenever the French troops made a sortie crowds followed them outside the gates, and there rich and poor, women, children, and old men, set to work to cut grass, nettles, and leaves, which they then boiled with salt. The Genoese Government had the grass which grew on the ramparts mown, and afterwards cooked in the public squares and distributed to the sick people who were not strong enough to get this coarse food and cook it themselves. Our troops used to boil nettles and all kinds of plants with their horseflesh; the richest and most eminent families envied them their meat, disgusting as it was—for nearly all the horses were ill for want of forage, and the flesh even of those which had died of consumption was distributed. During the latter part of the siege the exasperation of the Genoese populace became a serious danger. They were heard to exclaim that in 1746 their fathers had massacred an Austrian army, and that they ought to try to get rid of the French army in the same way. Decidedly it was better worth while to die fighting than to see their wives and children

succumb and then starve themselves. These symptoms of revolt were the more terrible in that if they had come to anything the English and the Austrians would undoubtedly have hastened to join the insurgents in the effort to overwhelm us.

In the middle of dangers so imminent and calamities so various, Masséna remained impassible and calm. To prevent any attempt at a rising, he proclaimed that the French troops had orders to fire on any assemblage of the inhabitants which amounted to more than four men. Our regiments continually bivouacked in the squares and in the principal streets, the approaches to which were defended by guns loaded with canister; and the Genoese, being unable to assemble, found it impossible to rise.

It may seem surprising that Masséna should have clung so obstinately to the defence of a place of which he could maintain the garrison with difficulty, and the population not at all. But Genoa weighed heavily just then in the balance of the fate of France. Our army was cut in two; the left and centre had retired behind the Var; while Masséna, shut up in Genoa, detained a portion of the Austrian army before that place, and thus prevented it from invading Provence in full force. Masséna knew that at Dijon, at Lyons, and at Geneva the First Consul was collecting a reserve army with which he purposed to cross the Alps by the Great St. Bernard, to enter Italy, and to surprise the Austrians by falling on their rear while they were occupied with the siege of Genoa. It was, therefore, of immense importance to us to hold that town as long as possible. The First Consul had given orders to that effect, and his foresight was justified by events. But let me return to what befell me in the siege.

On learning that my father had been brought wounded into Genoa, Colindo Trepano hastened to his bedside, and we met again there. He helped me in the most affectionate way to tend the sick man; and I was the more grateful to him that in the midst of our troubles my father had no one with him. All staff officers had received orders to place themselves at the service of the commander-in-chief. Very

soon provisions were no longer allowed to our servants; and they were compelled to take a musket and enrol themselves among the combatants, in order to claim the wretched ration which was distributed to the soldiers. The only exceptions were made in favour of a young valet named Oudin and a young groom who looked after our horses; but Oudin left us on learning that my father had been seized with typhus. This terrible disorder, like the plague, with which it has much affinity, always attacks the wounded and those who are already ill. My father took it; and just when he most needed care he had no one with him but myself, Colindo, and the groom Bastide. We carried out the doctor's prescriptions to the best of our power, and got no sleep day or night, being incessantly occupied in rubbing my father with camphorated oil, and in changing bedclothes and bandages. He could take nothing but broth, and to make this we had only bad horseflesh. My heart sank within me. Providence, however, sent us some aid. The great buildings of the public bakeries were close to the walls of the palace in which we lived; their terraces were almost in contact. That of the bakeries was very spacious; the crushing and mixing of the various grains which were added to the damaged flour to make bread for the garrison was carried on there. Bastide, the groom, had observed that when the workmen of the bakehouse had left the terrace it was invaded by swarms of pigeons, which had their nests in the different towers of the city and came thither to pick up what few grains might have been let fall in sifting. Being a man of intelligence, he contrived to cross the short space which separated this from our terrace, and on it set traps of various kinds wherewith he took the pigeons. Of these we made for my father a broth which he found excellent in comparison with that made from horse. To the horrors of famine and pestilence were added those of obstinate and incessant warfare; for all day long the French troops were fighting on the land side against the Austrians, and when night put a stop to this, the English, Turkish, and Neapolitan fleets, sheltered by the darkness from the fire of the harbour batteries, poured

enormous quantities of shells into the town, doing terrible damage. Thus we had not an instant of repose.

The noise of the cannonade and the cries of the dying reached my father's room, and agitated him extremely. He kept regretting that he could not be at the head of his division; and his mental state made his bodily condition worse. From day to day his illness grew more serious, and he became visibly weaker. Colindo and I never left him for an instant. At last, one night, while I was kneeling by his bedside bathing his wound, he spoke to me with his mind perfectly clear. Then, feeling his end approaching, he laid his hand on my head, stroked it caressingly, and said: 'Poor child! what is to become of you with no one to look after you, in the midst of the horrors of this terrible siege?' He murmured a few words, among which I made out my mother's name, dropped his arms, and closed his eyes.

Young as I was, and short as had been my service, I had seen plenty of men die in the field, and still more in the streets of Genoa; but these had fallen in the open air and in their clothes. Very different is the sight of a man dying in bed; and this last sad spectacle I had never yet witnessed. I thought, therefore, that my father had dropped off to sleep. Colindo, who understood the truth, had not the heart to tell me, and I was only undeceived some hours later, when M. Lachèze came in and I saw him draw the sheet over my father's face, saying, 'A terrible loss for his family and his friends.' Then, for the first time, I realised my full misfortune. My grief was so heartrending that it even touched the commander-in-chief, Masséna, who was not very easily moved, especially in circumstances like the present, where firmness was so much required. The critical position of affairs caused him to take in regard to me a step which I thought atrocious, though if I ever commanded in a besieged town I should do the same myself. In order to avoid anything which might weaken the *moral* of the troops Masséna had forbidden all funeral processions. He knew that I was unwilling to quit the mortal remains of my dear father, and suspected that my intention was to accompany them to the

grave. Fearing the effect on the troops of seeing a young officer, little more than a child, sobbing behind the bier of his father, a general of division, and a victim of this terrible war, Masséna came the next morning before daybreak into the room where my father was lying, and, taking me by the hand, led me under some pretext into a distant apartment. Meanwhile, at his orders, twelve grenadiers, accompanied only by Colonel Sacleux and another officer, took up the bier in silence and carried it off to the temporary grave on the ramparts towards the sea. Not till this sad ceremony was over did Masséna tell me what had been done, explaining the motives of his decision. I cannot express the despair into which I was thrown. It seemed to me that by this removal of my father's body without the last cares from me I had lost him a second time. It was no use complaining, and there was nothing more for me to do but to go and pray at his grave. I did not know where it was, but my friend Colindo had followed the funeral at a little distance, and he took me there. This kind young fellow gave me at this time proofs of a touching sympathy at a moment when everyone was thinking of nothing but his personal position.

Almost all the officers on my father's staff had been killed or carried off by typhus; we were eleven before the campaign, and there remained only two of us, Major R—— and myself. But R—— thought only about himself, and, instead of being any help to his general's son, he continued to live by himself in the town; M. Lachèze also left me to myself. Only the kind Colonel Sacleux showed any signs of interest in me, but as the commander-in-chief had given him the command of a brigade, he was constantly engaged in repelling the enemy outside the walls. I remained, therefore, alone in the vast Centurione Palace with Colindo, Bastide, and the old porter.

Scarcely a week had passed since I had lost my father when General Masséna, who wanted a great many officers about him, for he got some killed or wounded almost every day, sent me orders to come and act as his aide-de-camp. R—— and all the officers of generals who were killed or

disabled from riding were doing the like; I obeyed, and all day long attended the commander-in-chief during the fighting. When I was not kept at head-quarters I went home, and when night came Colindo and I, passing through dying and dead, through women and children who were lying about the streets, used to go and pray at my father's tomb.

Meanwhile famine was increasing to an alarming extent. By order of the commander-in-chief each officer was allowed to retain only one horse; all the rest had to be sent to the butcher. My father had left several, and it would have been very painful to me to know that the poor beasts were going to be killed. I saved their lives by proposing to the staff officers to exchange them for their broken-down animals, and gave these over to the butcher. Later on, the State paid for these horses on presentation of the order to give them up. I preserved one of these orders as a curious relic; it bears the signature of General Oudinot, chief of the staff to Masséna.

The cruel loss which I had undergone, the position in which I found myself, and the terrible scenes at which I was every day present, had in a short time developed my intelligence more than many years of happiness would have done. I understood that all those who a few months before had been surrounding my father with attentions were rendered selfish by the misery of the siege, and that I must find in myself courage and resource enough, not only for my own needs, but to support Colindo and Bastide. The chief thing was to find the means of feeding them, since they got no provision from the army stores. I had, indeed, as an officer double rations of horseflesh and bread; but all this together only made a pound of nourishment, and that very bad, and there were three of us. We very seldom now caught any pigeons, for their number had greatly diminished. As aide-de-camp to the commander-in-chief I had my place laid at his table, where once a day bread, roast horse, and dried pease were served; but I was so angry with Masséna for having deprived me of the sad consolation of following my father to the grave that I could not make up my mind to take my

place at his table, although all my comrades were there, and he had given me a general invitation. Ultimately, however, the desire of aiding my two unfortunate fellow-lodgers decided me to take my meals with the general. After that Colindo and Bastide each got a quarter of a pound of bread and the same amount of horseflesh. I did not myself get enough to eat, for at the General's table the portions were extremely minute, and I was very hard-worked. I often found my strength failing, and more than once it happened to me to be obliged to lie down on the ground to save myself from fainting.

Once more Providence came to our aid. Bastide was a native of the Cantal, and in the previous winter had come across another Auvergnat of his acquaintance who was settled at Genoa as a small tradesman. He went to see him, and was struck on entering the house by a smell like that of a grocer's shop. He remarked upon it to his friend, saying, 'You have got provisions?' The other admitted it, binding him to secrecy, for every kind of provisions found in private houses were carried off to the army stores. The sensible Bastide offered to find him a purchaser for any superfluous provisions who would pay in cash and keep his secret, and came to let me know of his discovery. My father had left several thousand francs, so I bought and had brought to the house at night a good store of cod, cheese, figs, sugar, chocolate, and so on. All this was horribly dear; the Auvergnat got nearly all my money, but I deemed myself only too happy in letting him do what he liked with me, for according to what I heard every day at head-quarters the siege was going to last a good deal longer, and the famine to go on increasing, which, unhappily, came true. What doubled my joy in getting means of subsistence was the thought that I was saving the life of my friend Colindo, who but for this would literally have starved to death, for he knew no one in the army except me and Colonel Sacleux.

Before very long the colonel met with a terrible disaster under the following circumstances: Masséna, attacked on every side, and seeing his troops mowed down by constant famine

and by fighting, and being obliged at the same time to keep in check an immense population driven by hunger to despair, found his position most critical. Knowing that if he was to maintain any order in his army he must establish an iron discipline, he cashiered without pity every officer who did not execute his orders precisely in virtue of the power which the law at that time conferred on commanders-in-chief. Many examples of this kind had already been made. One day, in a sortie which we pushed to a distance of six leagues from the town, the brigade commanded by Colonel Sacleux failed to be at the appointed hour in a valley where it was to have barred the Austrians' passage. Consequently they escaped, and the commander-in-chief, furious at seeing his combination fail, cashiered poor Colonel Sacleux, and announced it in a general order. It was quite possible that Sacleux had not understood what was expected of him, but there was no doubt about his courage. He would in his despair have certainly blown his brains out if his heart had not been set on gaining back his honour. He took a musket and placed himself in the ranks as a soldier. One day he came to visit us; Colindo and I were touched to the heart at seeing this excellent man in a private's uniform. We bade farewell to Sacleux, who, after the surrender of the place, was restored by the First Consul to his rank of colonel at the instance of Masséna himself, Sacleux having by his courage compelled him to reconsider his decision. But in the following year, seeing that peace was made in Europe, and wishing to free himself completely from the slur which had been so unjustly cast upon him, Sacleux asked leave to go and fight in San Domingo, and there was killed just as he was about to be appointed brigadier-general. There are some men with whom in spite of their merit destiny deals very hardly; he was one of them.

CHAPTER X

I CAN only speak very briefly of the operations of the siege, or rather blockade, which we sustained. At this period the fortifications of Genoa consisted on the land side merely of a wall flanked with towers; but what rendered the place capable of a good defence was the fact of its being surrounded at a short distance by hills whose summits and slopes were covered with forts and redoubts. The Austrians were always attacking these positions; as soon as they carried one we marched to retake it; the next day they tried again to get possession of it. If they succeeded we went to drive them out afresh—in short, it was a perpetual see-saw with varying chances, but on the whole we ended by remaining masters of the ground. These fights were often very brisk; in one of them General Soult, who was Masséna's right-hand man, was climbing Monte Corona at the head of his columns to recapture the fort of the same name which we had lost the day before, when a bullet smashed his knee just as the enemy, far outnumbering us, were charging down from the top of the hill. It was impossible with the few troops which we had at this point to resist such a torrent, and we had to beat a retreat. The soldiers carried Soult for some time on their muskets, but the intolerable pain compelled him to order them to set him down at the foot of a tree, where his brother and one of his aides-de-camp remained alone with him to defend him from the fury of the first of the enemy who should reach him. Luckily, among these were some officers, who treated their illustrious prisoner with much respect. The capture of General Soult having stimulated the ardour of the Austrians, they drove us very smartly back to the wall, and were preparing to assault this, when a tremendous

storm darkened the blue sky which we had had since the beginning of the siege. The rain fell in torrents. The Austrians halted, and the greater number of them sought shelter in cottages or under trees. Then Masséna, whose principal merit in war lay in profiting by all sorts of unforeseen circumstances, addressed his soldiers, rekindled their ardour, and, supporting them with troops brought up from the town, ordered a bayonet-charge, and led them, while the storm was at its height, against the Austrians; who, victorious so far, were taken aback by this audacity, and retired in disorder. Masséna pursued with such vigour that he cut off a force of 3,000 grenadiers, who laid down their arms.

This was not the first time that we had taken a good many prisoners. The total number of those captured since the beginning of the siege amounted to more than eight thousand; but, having no means of feeding them, the general had always sent them back on condition that they should not serve against us for six months. The officers kept their parole faithfully; but the unlucky soldiers, who did not know what their chiefs had undertaken on their behalf, were, on their return to the Austrian camp, distributed among other regiments, and compelled to fight again. If they again fell into our hands, which often happened, we gave them back again; they were again passed into other battalions, and so it happened that a great many men on their own admission were taken prisoners four or five times during the siege. Angry at this bad faith on the part of the Austrian generals, Masséna determined this time that the three thousand whom he had captured should be detained, officers and men. But in order that the task of guarding them should not be an additional duty for the troops, he placed the unhappy prisoners on board hulks in the harbour, and had some of the guns on the mole trained upon them. Then he sent a flag of truce to General Ott, commanding the Austrian troops before Genoa, to reproach him for his breach of good faith, and let him know that he did not feel bound to give the prisoners more than half the ration of a French soldier, but that he would

agree to an arrangement between the Austrians and the English under which boats should bring provisions every day to the prisoners, and not leave them till they had seen the food eaten, lest it should be believed that he, Masséna, was availing himself of this pretext to get provisions in for his own troops. The Austrian general, in the hope that a refusal would induce Masséna to send back his three thousand men, of whom he probably thought again to make use against us, withheld his consent to this philanthropic proposal; so Masséna carried out his declared intention.

The ration of the French was composed of a quarter of a pound of horrible bread and an equal quantity of horseflesh; so the prisoners got only half that quantity of each commodity. The siege lasted fifteen days longer, and the poor wretches remained all that time on this diet. In vain did Masséna every two or three days renew his proposal. Either from obstinacy or because the English admiral, Lord Keith, was unwilling to supply boats for fear of introducing typhus into his fleet, it was never accepted. The unhappy Austrians were yelling with rage and hunger on board the hulks; at last, after having eaten their shoes, knapsacks, pouches, and even, according to rumour, the bodies of some of their comrades, they nearly all died of starvation. There remained no more than 700 or 800 when the place was surrendered. As soon as the Austrian soldiers entered Genoa, they hastened to the harbour and supplied food to their comrades, but with so little judgment that all the survivors died. I have thought fit to relate this horrible incident not only as a further example of the calamities which war brings in its train, but more especially to brand the bad faith of the Austrian general in compelling his soldiers who had been made prisoners and sent back on parole again to bear arms against us in spite of his undertaking to send them back to Germany.

Of my own perils during the siege I will confine myself to recounting the two principal. I have already said that the Austrians and the English took it in turns to keep us constantly on the alert. The former attacked us at daybreak

on the landside, fought us all day long, and returned to rest at night. During the night Lord Keith's fleet came and bombarded us, trying under cover of darkness to get possession of the port, and thus forcing the garrison to watch that side most carefully, and preventing them from getting the least rest. One night when the bombardment was more than ordinarily violent, Masséna, having been informed that, by the help of some Bengal lights which had been fired on the beach, many English craft, laden with troops, could be seen advancing towards the moles, mounted with all his staff and his regular escort of guides. We were in all some 150 to 200 horsemen. As we passed a little square named the Campetto, the commander-in-chief halted to speak to an officer who was returning from the port. All were thronging round him, when a cry was heard, 'Look out! a shell!' We all looked up and beheld a vast mass of red-hot iron descending on the group of men and horses who were packed in the narrow space. I happened to be close to the wall of a great house, above the door of which was a marble balcony. I urged my horse under this and several of my neighbours did the same. Precisely on this balcony the shell dropped; it smashed it to pieces, bounded off on to the pavement, and burst with a tremendous noise in the middle of the square, which for a moment was lighted up by the flash and then relapsed into deeper darkness. We thought the loss would have been great; the profound silence was broken by the voice of General Masséna asking if anyone was wounded; there was no answer, for by a really miraculous chance not one of the fragments of the shell had struck a man or a horse in the crowd. As for those who, like myself, were under the balcony, they were covered with dust and fragments of building materials, but no one was wounded.

I have said that as a rule the English only bombarded us at night; but one day when they were celebrating some festival or other, their fleet, dressed with flags, sailed up to the town in the middle of the day, and amused itself by showering projectiles on us. The one of our batteries which was in the best position for replying to this fire was near the

mole, on a great tower-like bastion called the Lantern. The commander-in-chief ordered me to carry to the officer commanding this battery instructions to take good aim before firing, and to let all his fire converge upon an English brig which had impudently anchored a short distance from the Lantern. Our gunners aimed so well that one of our 500-lb. shells dropped on the English brig, smashing through from deck to keel and sinking it instantly.[1] This enraged the English admiral so much that he ordered all his gunboats to advance upon the Lantern, on which they opened a furious fire. Having fulfilled my orders, my duty was to return to Masséna; but, as is often and rightly said, young soldiers, not realising danger, frequently face it more coolly than experienced veterans. The spectacle which I witnessed was highly interesting; the platform of the Lantern, paved with flagstones, was about the area of an average courtyard, and was armed with twelve pieces of ordnance, the carriages of which were of great size. Difficult as it is for a vessel at sea to throw shells with accuracy at so small a mark as the platform of a tower, the English contrived to drop several on the Lantern. At the moments when they fell the gunners took refuge behind and beneath the massive wooden carriages. I followed their example, but our refuge was by no means secure, since the shells, being unable to break through the floor of the platform, rolled along the flags without our being able to foresee what direction they would take, and their fragments, spinning about from every point of the platform, flew beneath and behind the gun-carriages. It was, therefore, absurd for anyone to stay there, who, like me, was not obliged to do so; but I felt a fearful joy, if I may use the term, in rushing with the gunners to cover every time that a shell fell, and in returning with them as soon as it had burst and the fragments no longer flew. It was a sport for which I might have paid dear. One gunner had his legs broken;

[1] In the list given by James, of British ships lost during 1800, there is no mention of any at Genoa. The story told here bears a certain resemblance to that of the apocryphal destruction of another English brig off Boulogne. See below, p. 152.

others were severely wounded, for the huge fragments of iron did frightful execution. One of them cut in two a great timber of one of the carriages behind which I was just going to take shelter. In spite of it, I stayed on the platform until Colonel Mouton (afterwards Marshal Count of Lobau), who had served under my father and took an interest in me, happened to pass near the Lantern, and ordered me peremptorily to come away and go back to my post with the commander-in-chief. 'You are a young fellow still,' he added, 'but you must learn that in war it is foolish to expose oneself to needless dangers. What good would it have done you if you had had a leg smashed, without any advantage to your country?' I never forgot this lesson, and long after thanked the Count of Lobau for it. It has often struck me what a difference there would have been in my fortunes if I had lost a leg at the age of seventeen.

CHAPTER XI

THE obstinate courage with which Masséna had held Genoa had important consequences. Major Franceschi, sent by him to the First Consul, succeeded, both going and returning, in passing through the enemy's fleet at night undetected. He was back at Genoa on the 6th Prairial with the news that he had left Bonaparte descending from the Great St. Bernard at the head of his reserve force. Field-marshal Melas was so convinced of the impossibility of bringing such an army across the Alps, that while the force under General Ott was blockading us he had gone with the rest of his army to attack General Suchet on the Var, fifty leagues away, with the intention of invading Provence. This allowed the First Consul to enter Italy unopposed, so that the army of reserve was at Milan before the Austrians had begun to believe in its existence. Thus the resistance of Genoa had effected a powerful diversion in aid of France. Once in Italy, Bonaparte's first wish would have been to succour the valiant garrison of that town; but in order to do this he had to wait until his whole force was assembled, and the passage of the Alps offered great difficulties to the artillery and commissariat wagons. This delay allowed time for Melas to hasten up with the bulk of his forces from Nice to oppose the First Consul, who was thus unable to continue his march upon Genoa except by previously defeating the Austrian army.

But while Bonaparte and Melas were marching and countermarching in Piedmont and the province of Milan previously to the battle which was to decide the fate of Italy and France, the garrison of Genoa was at the last gasp. Typhus was doing frightful execution; the hospitals were charnel-houses; the measure of misery was full. Nearly all

the horses had been eaten, and the half-pound of wretched food, which was all that the troops had for some time received, was never secure for one day in advance. *Absolutely nothing* was left when, on the 15th Prairial, the commander-in-chief summoned all the generals and colonels, and announced that he had determined to take such sound men as remained and try to cut his way through and reach Leghorn. The officers, however, declared with one voice that the troops were utterly unfit to fight, even to march, without a sufficient meal to sustain their strength before starting. The stores were completely exhausted. So Masséna, deeming that by facilitating the entry of the First Consul into Italy he had carried out his instructions, and that it was now his duty to save the fragments of a garrison which had fought so valiantly, and which, in the interests of the country, ought to be preserved finally decided to offer terms for the evacuation of the place. He would not hear of *capitulation*.

For more than a month past the English admiral and General Ott had been proposing an interview, but Masséna had always refused. Now, however, he was constrained by the circumstances to send them word that he agreed to it. The meeting took place in a little chapel which stands on the bridge of Conegliano, and was situated between the sea and the French and Austrian outposts. The French, Austrian, and English staffs took their stand at the ends of the bridge. I was present at this most interesting scene. The enemy's commander showed special marks of esteem and respect to Masséna. Although the conditions which he required were unfavourable to them, Lord Keith said repeatedly: 'General, your defence has been so heroic that we can refuse you nothing.' It was agreed, therefore, that the garrison should not be prisoners, should retain their arms, and should proceed to Nice. As soon as they had reached that town they were free to take part again in hostilities.

Masséna well understood how important it was that the keen desire which the First Consul must be feeling to come to the aid of Genoa should not lead him into any movement which might compromise his safety. He demanded, there-

fore, that the conditions should include a safe-conduct through the Austrian army for two officers who were to bear to him the news of the evacuation of the place by the French troops. General Ott objected, having in view a speedy departure to join Melas with 25,000 envoys of the blockading force, and he did not wish that warning of this should be brought to the First Consul by Masséna's troops. But Lord Keith overruled this objection. The treaty was on the point of being signed when sounds as of distant cannon were heard far away among the mountains. Masséna put down his pen, exclaiming, 'There comes the First Consul with his army!' The hostile generals were amazed; but after waiting some time it became evident that the sound was that of thunder, and Masséna decided to sign.

The loss to the garrison and its commander of the full credit of holding Genoa till the First Consul could come up was not the only source of regret; Masséna would have been glad to hold out a few days longer, and by so much to delay the departure of General Ott's force. He clearly foresaw that this general would march to join Field-Marshal Melas, and thereby afford him valuable help in meeting the First Consul. His fear, though well founded, was unnecessary, for Ott was not able to effect a junction with the main Austrian army till the day after Marengo. The result of that battle would have been very different if the Austrians, whom we had so much trouble to beat as it was, had had another 25,000 men to bring against us. Thus Masséna's defence of Genoa had not only kept the Alps open for Bonaparte, and given Milan into his hands, but had also kept 25,000 men out of his way on the day of Marengo.

On the 16th Prairial the Austrians took possession of Genoa, after a siege of just two months.

So important did our commander-in-chief deem it that the First Consul should have timely notice of the treaty just concluded, that he had asked for a safe-conduct for two aides-de-camp, in order that if one fell ill the other might take on the despatch. It was as well that the officer to whom the duty was entrusted should be able to speak Italian, so Masséna selected

for it Major Graziani, a Piedmontese or Roman in the French service. With his wonted excess of suspicion, however, fearing that one who was not a Frenchman might be tampered with by the Austrians and induced to delay, he attached me to him, with special instructions to urge him forward till we fell in with the First Consul. There was really no need for this, for M. Graziani was perfectly loyal, and thoroughly understood the importance of his errand. We started on the 16th Prairial, and came up with Bonaparte the next evening at Milan.

General Bonaparte spoke with much sympathy of my recent loss, and promised if I behaved well to act a father's part to me. He kept his word. He was never tired of questioning M. Graziani and me both as to what had happened at Genoa and about the strength and direction of the Austrian forces which we had passed on our way to Milan. He kept us near him, and lent us horses from his stable. We had performed the journey on post-mules. We accompanied him to Montebello, and on to the battle-field of Marengo, where we were his orderly officers. I will not enter into the details of this memorable fight, in which no harm befell me. As is well known, we were on the verge of defeat, and should probably have been defeated if Ott's 25,000 men had come up before the end of the battle. The First Consul, fearing that they would appear every moment, was very anxious, and only recovered his spirits when our infantry and the cavalry of Desaix (whose death he only learnt later) had decided the victory by repulsing Zach's column of grenadiers. Just then, noticing that the horse which I rode was slightly wounded in the leg, he took me by the ear and said, laughing, 'You expect me to lend you my horses for you to treat them in that way!' As Major Graziani died in 1812, I am the only French officer who was present both at the siege of Genoa and at the battle of Marengo.

After the battle I returned to Genoa, which the Austrians were compelled, by the treaty made as a result of our victory, to evacuate. I met again Colindo and Major R——, visited

the grave of my father, and we embarked on board a French brig, which brought us to Nice in twenty-four hours. A few days later a Leghorn vessel brought Colindo's mother, who came to look after her son. This excellent young man and I had had our friendship cemented by the severe trials which we had gone through together; but our destinies lay apart, and with keen regret we had to separate.

As I mentioned above, Masséna's aide-de-camp, Franceschi, bearing despatches to the First Consul, had passed through the English fleet at night and succeeded in reaching France. He brought the news of my father's death. On receiving this my mother had had administrators of his estate [1] appointed, and they had sent orders to old Spire, who had remained at Nice with my father's travelling outfit, to sell everything and return at once to Paris. This having been done, I had nothing to keep me on the banks of the Var, and was eager to rejoin my mother—not an easy thing to do, for there were few public conveyances then. The coach from Nice to Lyons went only every other day, and all the places were taken weeks in advance for the crowd of sick and wounded officers coming also from Genoa. To get out of this difficulty, Major R——, two colonels, a dozen of other officers, and myself decided to form a little caravan and walk to Grenoble, passing along the lower spurs of the Alps, by Grasse, Sisteron, Digne, and Gap. Our scanty luggage was carried by mules, so that we could do eight or ten leagues a day. Bastide was with me, and I found him a great help, for I was not used to going so far on foot, and it was very hot. After eight days of a difficult march we reached Grenoble, where we found carriages to take us on to Lyons. It was with pain that I again beheld that town, where my father and I had stayed in a happier time. I longed and dreaded to see my mother and brothers. I felt as if they would demand of me an account for husband and father; I was returning alone, and had left him in his grave in a strange land. My grief was very keen. I needed a

[1] Probably the nearest English approach to *conseil de tutelle*. These, however, would also have personal authority over the children.

friend who would comprehend and share it; and meanwhile the wild spirits of Major R——, revelling, after so much privation, in abundant good cheer, cut me to the heart. I resolved, therefore, to set out for Paris without him; but, now that I needed him no longer, he averred that his duty was to restore me to the arms of my mother, and I was obliged to endure his company in the mail coach as far as Paris.

I will not attempt to recount my meeting with my mother and brothers. Some scenes can be realised by everyone who has a heart, but are too sad to describe. Adolphe was not at Paris, but at Rennes, with Bernadotte, then commanding the Army of the West. My mother had a rather pretty country house at Carrière, near the forest of St. Germain. I passed two months there with her, my uncle Canrobert, who had come back from abroad, and an old Knight of Malta, M. d'Estresse, a former friend of my father's; my young brother and M. Gault came now and then to visit us. In spite of the loving care and the proofs of affection which all bestowed on me, I fell into a gloomy state of melancholy, and my health gave way. Both in mind and in body I had suffered much. I became incapable of any work; reading, of which I had always been fond, grew intolerable to me. I spent a great part of the day alone in the forest, lying in the shade and plunged in sad meditation. Of an evening I would accompany my mother, my uncle, and the old gentleman in their customary walk along the banks of the Seine; but I joined little in the conversation, keeping my sad thoughts to myself. I was ever thinking of my poor father dying for want of proper care. My mother, my uncle, and M. d'Estresse, though alarmed at my state, had sufficient tact not to take notice of it—a thing which only irritates a mind out of health; but they endeavoured gradually to remove the sad recollections which were torturing me by getting the holidays of my two younger brothers hastened forward. They joined us in the country, and the presence of these two lads, of whom I was very fond, allowed me to divert my mind from my sorrow by the trouble which I took to make their stay

at Carrière pleasant. I took them to Versailles, to Maisons, to Marly, and their childish satisfaction gradually revived my heart after the crushing sorrow which it had undergone. Who could then have foretold that these two handsome boys, so full of life, would have shortly ceased to exist?

CHAPTER XII

THE autumn of 1800 was drawing to an end. My mother returned to Paris, my young brothers to school, and I received orders to go to Rennes and join the commander-in-chief—Bernadotte. He had been the closest friend of my father, who had rendered him services of all kinds in various circumstances. To evince his gratitude, Bernadotte had written to me that he had kept an aide-de-camp's place vacant for me. I had found his letter at Nice on my return from Genoa, and it had decided me to refuse the offer of Masséna to take me as regular aide-de-camp, with leave at the same time to spend some months with my mother before rejoining the Army of Italy. My father had insisted on my brother's continuing the studies necessary for entry into the École Polytechnique, so that when we lost our father Adolphe was not yet in the army. When, however, he heard the sad news, he was unable to bear the thought that while his younger brother was already an officer who had seen service he was still on the form. He threw up his study for the scientific corps, and preferred to enter the infantry at once, which allowed him to leave the school. A good opportunity offered; the Government had just ordered the creation of a new regiment, which was being raised in the department of the Seine. The nomination of the officers was to be in the hands of General Lefebvre, who, as you will remember, had succeeded my father in the command of the Paris division. Lefebvre eagerly seized the opportunity to be of service to the son of one of his old comrades who had died in the service of his country, so he appointed my brother a sub-lieutenant in the new corps. So far it was all right, but, instead of going to join his company, and without even

awaiting my return from Genoa, Adolphe hurried off to Rennes to join Bernadotte, who, without further consideration, gave the post to the brother who arrived first, as if it was a question of a prize for a race. In this way, when I reached Rennes and joined the staff of the Army of the West, I learnt that my brother had received the commission of regular aide-de-camp to the chief, and that I was only a supernumerary, that is, provisional aide-de-camp. I was much disappointed, for if I had expected this I should have accepted Masséna's proposal; but it was now too late. In vain did Bernadotte assure me that he would obtain leave to increase the number of his aides-de-camp. I had no hope of it, and I understood that before long I should have to go elsewhere. I have never approved of two brothers serving together on the same staff or in the same regiment, because they always stand in each other's way. It will be seen that this happened frequently in the course of our career.

Bernadotte's staff was at that time composed of officers who nearly all reached a high rank. Four of them were already colonels, viz.: Gérard, Maison, Willatte, and Maurin, of whom Gérard was undoubtedly the most remarkable. He had plenty of talent and of courage, and a great instinct for war. At the battle of Waterloo he was under the orders of Marshal Grouchy, and gave him admirable advice, which might have assured us the victory. Maison became a marshal, and afterwards Minister of War, under the Bourbons. Willatte was a general of division under the Restoration; Maurin the same. The other aides-de-camp of Bernadotte were Majors Chalopin, killed at Austerlitz, and Mergey, who became major-general; Captain Maurin, brother of the colonel, became major-general, also Sub-Lieutenant Willatte. My brother Adolphe, who became major-general, was the last of the regular aides-de-camp; finally, Maurin, brother of the other two, who became colonel, and I were the supernumeraries. Thus of eleven aides-de-camp attached to the staff of Bernadotte, two reached the rank of marshal, three that of lieutenant-general, four major-general, and one died on the field of battle.

In the winter of 1800 Portugal, supported by England, declared war against Spain, and the French Government resolved to take the side of the latter Power. Consequently troops were sent to Bayonne and Bordeaux, and at Tours were assembled the grenadier companies of numerous regiments quartered about Brittany and Vendée. This select force, 7,000 to 8,000 men strong, was intended to form the reserve of the so-called Army of Portugal, of which Bernadotte was to have the command. He therefore had to move his head-quarters to Tours, whither were sent his horses and his outfit, as also those of the officers attached to his person. The general, however, in order both to receive his last orders from the Consul and to take Madame Bernadotte back, had to go to Paris. As in such cases it is usual during the absence of the general for his staff officers to have leave to go and take farewell of their families, it was decided that all the regular aides-de-camp might go to Paris, and that the supernumeraries should accompany the baggage to Tours in order to look after the domestics and pay them every month, and to arrange with the commissaries for the distribution of forage and the allotment of quarters for this large number of men and horses. This disagreeable duty therefore fell upon Lieutenant Maurin and myself. On horseback and in the depth of winter and in horrible weather, we did the eight long days of march which separate Rennes from Tours; and there we had all sorts of trouble in installing the head-quarters. We were told that it would remain there for a fortnight at most, but we remained there six long months, horribly bored, our comrades the while enjoying themselves in the capital. This was a foretaste of the annoyances which the position of supernumerary aide-de-camp caused me. Thus ended the year 1800, during which I had undergone so much pain both of mind and body.

CHAPTER XIII

At that time there was very good society at Tours, and much amusement going on; but although I received many invitations I accepted none. The task of attending to the oversight of a great number of men and horses fortunately kept me well occupied; otherwise the isolation in which I lived would have been unendurable. The horses belonging to the commander-in-chief and to the officers of his staff were more than eighty in number, and all were at my disposal. I took two or three of them every day and made long excursions in the neighbourhood of Tours. These, solitary as they were, had a great charm for me, and afforded me a tranquil distraction.

Meanwhile the First Consul had changed his arrangements with regard to the Army of Portugal. He entrusted the command of it to his brother-in-law, General Leclerc,[1] and retained Bernadotte with the Army of the West. Consequently when my brother and the other aides-de-camp had rejoined the staff at Tours they received orders almost directly to return to Brittany and remove to Brest, whither the general was about to proceed. It is a long journey, especially when one travels by fixed marches; but it was the fine time of year, we were young, and there were plenty of us, so the way was merry enough. Being unable to ride, owing to an injury which I had accidentally received in the hip, I went in one of the general's carriages. Him we found at Brest.

In the harbour of Brest were not only a great number of French vessels, but also a Spanish fleet, commanded by Admiral Gravina. He was killed afterwards at Trafalgar, where the combined fleets of France and Spain fought that

[1] Married to Pauline Bonaparte. See below, p. 113.

of England under the celebrated Nelson, who also lost his life in the engagement. At the time of our arrival at Brest, the fleets were intended to take General Bernadotte and a strong expeditionary force of French and Spaniards over to Ireland. This plan was never carried out, but in the meantime the presence of so many officers, naval and military, kept the town of Brest very lively. The commander-in
many generals and admirals kept open
soldiers of the two nations were on
so that I made the acquaintance of

We were very well off at Brest,
chief thought it wiser to retransfer the h
a dull town, but more central for his district. No sooner had we got settled there than what I had foreseen happened. The First Consul reduced the number of aides-de-camp which the general might keep on his staff. He was to have only one colonel and five officers of lower rank; no more *provisional* aides-de-camp. Accordingly I received notice that I was to be attached to a light cavalry regiment. I could have made up my mind to it well enough if it had been to return to the 1st Hussars, where I was known, and of which I still wore the uniform; but it was more than a year since I had left the regiment, and the colonel had filled up my place. The Minister sent me a commission in the 25th Mounted Chasseurs, which had just entered Spain and was marching on the Portuguese frontier, in the direction of Salamanca and Zamora. I felt keenly the injury that Bernadotte had done me in misleading me by false promises; for otherwise I should either have been a regular member of Masséna's staff in Italy, or have resumed my place in the 1st Hussars. Discontented as I was, I was bound to obey orders; and my first impulse of ill-humour past—they pass quickly at that age—I was in a hurry to be on the road and get away from the general against whom I had a grievance. My father had often lent him money, especially when he was buying his estate at Lagrange; but, though he knew that his old friend's son, hardly well of a recent injury, had to traverse a great part of France and the whole of Spain, and buy new uniforms

into the bargain, he never offered to advance me a sou; and, short of money as I was, I would not have asked him to do so for all the world. But, luckily for me, there was at Rennes an old uncle of my mothers, M. de Verdal of Gruniac, formerly paymaster in the Penthièvre regiment of foot. It was with him that my mother had lived during the first years of the Revolution. This old gentleman, though somewhat eccentric, was very kind; not only did he advance me the money of which I stood in great need, but he gave me some out of his own purse.

The chasseurs at that period wore the hussar-jacket, except that it was green; but none the less I was foolish enough to shed a few tears when I had to abandon the Bercheny uniform and give up the name of hussar for that of chasseur. I took leave pretty coldly of Bernadotte. He gave me letters of introduction to Lucien Bonaparte, then ambassador at Madrid, and to General Leclerc, commanding the Army of Portugal.

On the day of my departure all the aides-de-camp gave me a breakfast, and I set out with a heavy heart. Two days' journey brought me to Nantes, tired to death, with much pain in my side, and convinced that I should never have endurance enough to ride the 450 leagues which lay between me and the frontier of Portugal. As good luck would have it, at Nantes, in the house of one of my schoolfellows of Sorèze, I found a Spanish officer, by name Don Rafael, who was going to the dépôt of his regiment in Estremadura. We arranged that I should show him the way as far as the Pyrenees, and that from that point he should assume the direction of the journey so far as our ways lay together.

We passed through La Vendée by coach. Every market-town and village still bore the traces of burning, though two years had passed since the end of the civil war. It was a painful sight. We visited La Rochelle, Rochefort, and Bordeaux. From the last place to Bayonne we travelled in carriages with four places, which never went out of a walk through the sandy Landes. We often got out, and, walking merrily forward, would go and rest under some clump of

pines. As we sat in the shade Don Rafael would take his guitar and sing. In this way we reached Bayonne in five or six days.

Before crossing the Pyrenees I had to present myself to the general commanding at Bayonne, whose name was Ducos; an excellent man, who had served under my father. He took an interest in me, and was anxious that I should delay entering Spain for a few days, as he had just learnt that a band of brigands had been rifling some travellers not far from the frontier. At all times, even before the War of Independence, their adventurous and yet indolent character has given the Spaniards a decided taste for brigandage, which has been further encouraged by the division of the country into several kingdoms, once independent states, and still preserving their own laws, fashions, and frontiers. In some of these ancient states there are customs-duties; others, like Biscay and Navarre, are exempt. The consequence is, that the inhabitants of the provinces which enjoy free trade are always trying to smuggle forbidden wares into those whose frontiers are guarded by lines of well-armed and brave preventive men. The smugglers, on their side, have from time immemorial been quite ready to employ force where craft does not succeed; nor is their trade in any way discreditable in Spanish eyes, being considered a righteous warfare against the abuse of customs-duties. To plan expeditions and carry them out without concealment, to take military precautions, to hide in the mountains, resting, smoking, sleeping—such is the life of the smugglers. The large profits on a single successful operation put them in a position to live at their ease and do nothing for several months. When, however, the custom-house people have beaten them in one of their frequent fights, and captured their convoy of merchandise, the smugglers, brought to bay, have no scruple about turning highwaymen. They exercise their calling with much good-feeling, for they never murder travellers, and as a rule leave them money enough to continue their journey. They had just treated an English family in this fashion; and General Ducos, wishing to spare us the inconvenience of being

plundered, had intended to delay our departure. Don Rafael, however, remarked that he knew the ways of Spanish brigands well enough to be certain that the safest time to travel through a given district was when the bands had just committed an offence against the law, because at such times they get out of the way for a while. So the general sanctioned our departure.

At the time of which I am speaking carriage-horses were quite unknown in Spain, all carriages, even those of the King, being drawn by mules. Coaches there were none, and for posting there were only saddle-horses, so that the very greatest nobles who had their own carriages were compelled when they travelled to hire mules and go by short day's journeys. Well-to-do travellers hired carriages which did not do more than ten leagues in the day; the poorer people joined one of the caravans of donkey-drivers who transported goods after the fashion of our carriers; but nobody travelled alone, partly by reason of the highwaymen, but also for the low esteem in which this mode of travelling was held. After our arrival at Bayonne, Don Rafael, who now had the direction of our journey, told me that, as we were neither sufficiently great people to hire a carriage and a team of mules for ourselves, nor paupers enough to go with the ass-drivers, the only alternative left was to ride post or to take places in a hired carriage. Riding post, which I have since often done, did not suit me, because it was impossible to take our baggage with us; it was decided, then, that we had to go by public carriage. Don Rafael made terms with an individual who, in consideration of 800 francs apiece, undertook to carry us to Salamanca, providing our board and lodging at his own cost. I thought this very dear, for it was double what a similar journey would have cost in France, and I had just had to spend a good deal of money on the journey to Bayonne; but it was the regular price, and there was no other way of getting to my new regiment, so I accepted the terms.

We started in an immense old coach, three places in which were occupied by an inhabitant of Cadiz with his wife and daughter. A prior of Benedictines from the University

of Salamanca made up the tale of passengers. Everything in this journey was naturally new to me. To begin with, the team astonished me much. It consisted of six splendid mules, of which, to my great surprise, the wheelers alone had reins and bridles. The other four went free, guided by the voice of the driver and his *zagal*, or teamster. The former, perched in lordly style on a huge box, gave his orders gravely to the *zagal*, who, nimble as a squirrel, would often do more than a league on foot, running beside the mules at full trot; then in the twinkling of an eye he would climb on to the box beside his master, only to get down and get up again, and that twenty times during the journey. He would run round the carriage and the team to make sure that nothing was out of place, and as he performed this exercise he was continually singing to encourage his mules, each of which he would call by her name; he never struck them, his voice being sufficient to stimulate any one who was slackening her pace.

The performances, and especially the songs, of this man were a great amusement to me. I took also much interest in the conversation that went on in the carriage; for though I spoke no Spanish, what I knew of Latin and Italian made me able to understand my companions, and I answered them in French, which they understood fairly well. The five Spaniards—even the two ladies and the monk—soon lighted up their cigars. I regretted that I had not yet acquired the habit of smoking. We were all in good humour; Don Rafael, the ladies, and even the stout Benedictine used to sing in chorus. We generally started betimes, and used to stop from one to three to dine, rest the mules, and let the heat of the day go by. During this we slept, or, as the Spaniards call it, made our *siesta*. Then we went on to our sleeping-place. The meals were plentiful enough, but the flavour of the Spanish cookery seemed to me at first horrible; however, I ended by getting used to it, but I never could reconcile myself to the dreadful beds which were offered to us in the *posadas*, or inns. They were truly disgusting, as Don Rafael, who had just passed a year in France, was compelled to admit. To avoid this

inconvenience, on the first day of entering Spain I asked to sleep on a truss of straw. Unhappily, I learnt that a truss of straw was a thing unknown in this country, since, instead of threshing the sheaves, they are trampled out by mules, whereby the straw is reduced to small pieces of hardly more than half a finger's-length. I had the brilliant idea of getting a great sack filled with this chopped straw; then, placing it in a barn, I slept on it wrapped in my cloak, and thus escaped the vermin with which the beds and the rooms were infested. In the morning I emptied my sack and placed it in the carriage, and in this fashion, by getting it filled at each sleeping-place, I had a clean mattress. My invention was imitated by Don Rafael.

We traversed the mountainous provinces of Navarre, Biscay, and Alava; then we crossed the Ebro and entered the vast plains of Castile. We saw Burgos and Valladolid, and after fifteen days' journey reached Salamanca. There I parted, not without regret, from my pleasant travelling-companion Don Rafael, whom I was to meet again later on in the same regions during the War of Independence. General Leclerc was at Salamanca; he received me most kindly, and even proposed that I should stay with him as supernumerary aide-de-camp; but my recent experience had shown me that, although service on the staff offers more advantages in the way of liberty than service with the regiment, this is only when one holds the position of a regular aide-de-camp, otherwise all the tiresome duties fall to your share, and you have only a very uncertain position. I refused, therefore, the favour which the commander-in-chief offered me, and asked leave to do duty with my regiment. It was just as well that I acted in this way, for in the following year the general, having got the command of the expedition to San Domingo, took with him a lieutenant who had accepted the place which I refused, and all the staff officers, as well as the general, died of the yellow fever.

I found the 25th Chasseurs at Salamanca. The colonel, M. Moreau, a very kind old officer, and my new comrades received me well, and in a few days I was on the best terms

with them all. I was introduced to the society of the town; for at that time the position of a Frenchman in Spain was pleasant enough, and quite unlike what it afterwards became. In fact, in 1801 we were allies of the Spaniards; we came to fight on their behalf against the Portuguese and English, and so they treated us as friends. The French officers were lodged with the most wealthy inhabitants; there was quite a competition to take us in; we were received everywhere, and overwhelmed with invitations. Admitted thus familiarly into the homes of the Spaniards, we were able to form a much better idea of their character in a short time than those officers could do in several years who did not come to the Peninsula until the War of Independence. I lodged with a professor of the University, who put me in a very pleasant room looking out on the fine square. My regimental duties were light, and left me plenty of leisure, of which I availed myself to study the Spanish language, which, to my thinking, is the most stately and the finest in Europe. At Salamanca I met for the first time the celebrated General Lasalle, then colonel of the 10th Hussars: he sold me a horse.

The 15,000 French sent into the Peninsula, under General Leclere, formed the right wing of the Spanish grand army, commanded by the Prince of the Peace, under whose orders they therefore were. He came one day to review us. This favourite of the Queen of Spain was at that time practically king. He seemed to me very well satisfied with his personal appearance, although he was small of stature and of no distinction; still he lacked neither elegance nor ability. He ordered our division forward, and my regiment went to Toro, and then to Zamora. At first I regretted Salamanca, but we were very well off in the other towns, and especially as Zamora. There I lodged with a rich merchant, whose house had a splendid garden, where a numerous company used to meet in the evening for music and conversation, amid shrubberies of pomegranates, myrtles, and lemon-trees. It is hard to appreciate thoroughly the beauties of nature unless one knows these delicious nights of Southern lands.

Nevertheless, we had to tear ourselves from this agreeable

life to go and attack the Portuguese. We invaded their territory, and got the best of them in several trifling affairs. The French division marched upon Viseu, while the Spanish army descended the Tagus and entered the Alemtejo. We counted on shortly entering Lisbon as conquerors; but the Prince of the Peace, who had without due consideration summoned the troops into the Peninsula, became, with no more consideration, alarmed at their presence, and in order to get rid of them concluded a treaty of peace with Portugal without the knowledge of the First Consul. He was clever enough to get this ratified by the French ambassador Lucien Bonaparte, which irritated the First Consul considerably, and from that day dated the enmity of the two brothers. The French troops remained some months longer in Portugal, till the beginning of 1802. We then returned to Spain, and revisited our pleasant garrisons of Zamora, Toro, and Salamanca, where we had always been so well received. This time I traversed Spain on horseback with my regiment, and had no longer to dread the horrible beds of the *posadas*, since we were billeted every night in the most well-to-do houses. This marching by stages when one goes with a regiment and in fine weather is not wanting in a certain charm: one is always changing the scene without leaving one's companions; one gets a detailed view of the country; one chats as one goes along; at meals, whether good or bad, one has company; and one is in a good position for observing the ways of the inhabitants. Our chief amusement of an evening was to see the Spaniards, roused from their languor, dance fandangos and boleros with perfect grace and agility. The colonel often offered them the band, but they preferred, with reason, their guitars, castanets, and women's voices—an accompaniment which does not take away the national character from their dance. These impromptu open-air balls of the working-class in town and country alike had such a charm for us, though only as spectators, that we were sorry to leave them behind. After more than a month's march we re-crossed the Bidassoa; and though my stay in Spain had given me nothing but satisfaction, I was pleased to see France again.

CHAPTER XIV

At that time each regiment managed its own remounts, and our colonel had been authorised to buy some sixty horses. He hoped to pick them up by degrees in French Navarre, on the way to Toulouse, where we were to be in garrison. But for my sins we arrived at Bayonne on the very day of the local fair. There were numbers of horse-dealers there, and the colonel arranged with one of them to furnish at once the horses required. They could not be paid for in ready money, because the funds of which we had been advised by the Minister would not arrive for eight days. Accordingly the colonel ordered that an officer should remain at Bayonne to receive the money and pay the dealer; and this duty, which I did not bless, fell to me. Later on it cost me a disagreeable adventure; but at the moment I thought only of losing the pleasure of my comrades' society on the journey. Still, annoying as it was, I had to obey orders. That I might have less trouble in rejoining the regiment, the colonel decided that my horse should go on with it, and that, my task accomplished, I should take the coach for Toulouse. There were several of my old schoolfellows at Bayonne, and with them I passed the time pleasantly. The funds came; I received them and paid, and, my cares being at an end, prepared to rejoin my regiment.

I possessed a jacket made of nankeen, with trimmings of the same, and silver buttons—a fancy uniform which I had had made when I was on Bernadotte's staff, where it was the fashion to dress in this way for travelling in hot weather. This I determined to wear for the journey from Bayonne to Toulouse, as I was not with the regiment. So I put my uniform in my trunk and sent it to the coach, having

engaged, and unluckily *paid for*, my place. It was to start at five in the morning, and I charged the waiter at my hotel to call me at four, which the scamp faithfully promised to do. So I went to sleep in perfect security; but he forgot me, and when I opened my eyes the sun was shining brightly into my room, and it was past eight. What a nuisance! I was petrified. However, after storming a good deal, swearing a little, and invoking curses on the head of the faithless waiter, I saw that I must make up my mind to do something. The coach only went every other day, which was inconvenient, to begin with; but it was not the worst; for though, as I had remained behind on duty, my fare had been found out of the regimental chest, I could not claim this a second time. I had been foolish enough to pay for the whole distance, so that if I booked afresh it would have to be out of my own pocket. Coach-fares were very dear then, and I had very little money. Moreover, what could I do for two days at Bayonne, when all my things were gone? So I settled to walk the distance. Starting straightway from the town, I trudged resolutely along the Toulouse road. I was lightly clad, and had nothing to carry but my sword, which I carried on my shoulder; so I did the first stage nimbly enough, and slept at Peyrehorade.

On the morrow—a day of ill-omen—I was to reach Orthez. I had already done half the distance when one of those fearful storms which one only sees in the South came on. Rain and hail fell in torrents and lashed my face. The high-road, never good, became a quagmire through which I had all conceivable difficulty in walking with spurs on my boots. A walnut-tree was struck by lightning close to me; but no matter, I went steadily on with the resolution of a Stoic. But behold, in the midst of the lightning and the tempest, I saw two mounted gendarmes approaching. You may imagine the figure I cut, after two hours' wading through the mud, with my nankeen pantaloons and jacket. The gendarmes belonged to the force at Peyrehorade, and were returning thither; but they seemed to have been breakfasting well at Orthez, for they struck me as being fairly drunk.

The elder asked for my papers. I handed him my passport whereon I was described as sub-lieutenant in the 25th Mounted Chasseurs. 'You a sub-lieutenant! cried the gendarme. 'You are too young to be an officer.' 'But read the personal description, and you will see it says that I am under twenty; besides, it is correct at all points.' 'That may be, but you have forged it, and the proof is that the uniform of the Chasseurs is green, and you have got a yellow jacket. You are a runaway conscript, and I arrest you.' 'Very good; but when we get to Orthez I shall have no difficulty in proving to your lieutenant that I am an officer and this passport was made out for me.' My arrest did not trouble me much until the elder gendarme declared that he had no intention of returning to Orthez, that his quarters were at Peyrehorade, and that I was going thither with him. I declared I was not going to do any such thing; that if I had had no papers he would have a right to require it, but that as I had produced a passport he had no business to make me go back, and that according to the regulations he ought to go with me to Orthez. The younger man, who was also less in liquor, said that I was right; whereupon a lively altercation arose between the two horsemen. They insulted each other freely, and presently, in the midst of the tremendous storm which was going on all the time, they drew their swords and fell on madly. As for me, being afraid that I might get wounded in this ridiculous combat, I got down into the immense ditch by the roadside, waded through, up to my waist in water, and clambered up into the neighbouring field, whence I had a good view of my lively friends foining away to the best of their power. Luckily, their cloaks, heavy with wet, hampered their arms, and their horses, frightened by the thunder, would not come near each other, so the combatants were only able to aim unsteady blows. At last the elder gendarme's horse fell, and the rider rolled into the ditch. Emerging, covered with mud, he found that his saddle was broken, and that he had no choice but to continue his journey on foot, which he did, announcing to his comrade that he must be responsible for the prisoner. Left alone with the

more reasonable of the gendarmes, I pointed out to him that if I had had a guilty conscience it would have been easy for me to escape across-country, since I had between him and me a broad ditch full of water which his horse would certainly not be able to cross, but that, as he admitted that he had no right to make me retrace my steps, I was going to recross and come to him. So I resumed my journey escorted by the gendarme, who was quite sobered. We fell into conversation, and the man, understanding from the way in which I had surrendered when I might have easily escaped that I probably was what I said, would have let me go but for his responsibility to his comrade. Finally he became ready to do anything for me, and said that he would not take me to Orthez, but would be satisfied with consulting the mayor of Puyoo as we passed through that place. I entered it as a malefactor; the inhabitants, all driven home by the storm, stood at windows and doors to see the criminal brought in by a gendarme. The mayor, a good, stout, sensible peasant, whom we found in his barn threshing his wheat, looked through my passport, and said at once to the gendarme, 'Set this young man at liberty at once. You had no right to arrest him, for an officer on a journey is identified by his papers and not by his clothes.' Could Solomon have given a better judgment? Nor did the good peasant stop at that. He begged me to stay with him till the storm was over, and offered me refreshment. As we chatted he said that he had once seen a General Marbot at Orthez. I said it was my father, and described him. Thereat the good fellow, whose name was Bordenave, with redoubled civility, insisted on drying my clothes, and wanted me to stay the night. I declined with thanks, and resumed my way to Orthez, where I arrived at nightfall, tired out and with aching limbs.

Next morning I had hard work to get my boots on, so wet were they and so swollen my feet. Still, I dragged myself as far as Pau, and there, being quite done up, I had to halt for the rest of the day. I found no means of conveyance other than the mail; the places were dear, but I took one to Gimont. There I was received with open arms by

M. Dorignac, the friend of my father, in whose house I had passed some months after leaving Sorèze. I rested some days with him and his family; then the coach bore me to Toulouse. My expenses had come to four times the cost of the place which the waiter's carelessness had lost me.

On reaching Toulouse I was going to set about finding a lodging, but the colonel told me that he had taken me a room in the house of an old doctor, a friend of his, named M. Merlhes. I shall never forget his name, for no one could have been kinder than were this venerable man and his numerous family. During the fortnight that I stayed with them I was treated rather as a child of the house than as a lodger.

The regiment was strong and well mounted; we exercised very often, and I took much interest in it, though I got occasional punishments over it from Major Blancheville. He was an excellent officer of long standing in the service, and from him I learnt to do my duty with precision, and in this respect I owe much to him. Before the Revolution he had been adjutant in the Lunéville gendarmes, and had a thorough knowledge of his profession. He took a great interest in such young officers as were capable of learning, and forced them, whether they would or not, to study their business. As for the others—the blockheads as he called them—he was contented to shrug his shoulders when they did not know their theory or blundered in their drill; but he never punished them for that. There were three of us sub-lieutenants whom he had distinguished; these were MM. Gavoille, Demonts, and myself. With us he never overlooked an inaccurate word of command, and would put us under arrest for the smallest faults. As he was very good-natured off duty, we ventured to ask him why he reserved his severity for us. He replied, 'Do you think I am such a fool as to waste my time in soaping a negro? MM. —— and —— are too old, and have not sufficient abilities for me to waste my time in completing their education. As for you, you have got all the necessary materials for success; you only want to work, and work you shall.' I never forgot this answer, which I turned to account when I

was colonel. Old Blancheville undoubtedly had drawn the horoscope of the three sub-lieutenants correctly, for Gavoille became lieutenant-colonel, Demonts general of brigade, and I lieutenant-general.

When I came to Toulouse I exchanged the horse which I had bought in Spain for a beautiful Navarrese. The prefect having got up some races on the occasion of some festivity or other, Gavoille, who was devoted to races, had entered my horse. One day, when I was practising him on the training-ground, the circle being small, he got puzzled by the sharpness of the curve, and, galloping straightforward with the speed of an arrow, he ran his chest against the sharp angle of a garden wall, and fell stone-dead. My comrades thought I was killed, or at least severely wounded; but, by a perfectly miraculous piece of luck, I had not the smallest scratch. When they picked me up, and I saw my poor horse lying motionless, I felt deep grief. I returned, very melancholy, to my quarters, seeing that I should be forced to remount myself, and for that purpose to ask my mother, who was by no means in affluence, for some more money. Count Defermon, a minister of state, and one of our trustees, had opposed the sale of our remaining property, because, foreseeing that when peace came land would increase in value, he thought, with reason, that we ought to hold on to it and gradually reduce our debts by strict economy. It was one of the greatest obligations that we owed to M. Defermon, who was one of my father's sincerest friends, and I have always retained a great reverence for his memory.

When my request for a new horse was brought before the trustees, General Bernadotte, who was one of them, burst out laughing, saying that it was an excellent trick, and the pretext very well chosen—in fact, giving them to understand that my request was what is nowadays called a 'plant.' But, luckily, my request was backed up by a certificate from my colonel, and M. Defermon added that he believed me incapable of trying to get money by a trick. He was quite right; for though I only had an allowance of 600 francs, while my pay was only 95 francs a month, with twelve francs

in addition for lodging, I never was a sou in debt—I always had a dread of it.

I bought a new horse—not as good as the Navarrese, but the general inspection, which the First Consul had re-established, was drawing near, and I was obliged to be mounted without delay; all the more that we were going to be inspected by the celebrated General Bourcier, who had a great reputation for severity. I was told off to go to receive him with a detachment of thirty men. He met me very kindly, and spoke of my father, whom he had known well, which did not prevent him from putting me under arrest the next day. You shall hear the reason; it is a good story.

One of our captains, named B——, a fine young fellow, would have been one of the handsomest men in the army if his calves had been in keeping with the rest of his person; but he had legs like stilts, which had a very bad effect with the tight—so-called Hungarian—pantaloons worn at that time by the chasseurs. In order to meet this inconvenience, Captain B—— had had some good-sized pads made in the shape of calves, which made his handsome figure complete. You shall see how these false calves cost me an arrest, though they were not the sole cause of it. It was prescribed by the regulations that the officers should have their horses' tails long, like those of the troopers. Our colonel, M. Moreau, was always admirably mounted, but all his horses had their tails docked, and, as he feared that General Bourcier, who was very strict in maintaining the regulations, would reprimand him for setting a bad example to his officers, he had caused, for the purposes of the inspection, false tails to be attached to all his horses. These were so marvellously well fitted that unless you knew you would have thought them natural. We went to the inspection, to which General Bourcier had invited General Suchet, inspector of infantry, as well as General Gudin, commanding the territorial division. They were accompanied by a numerous and brilliant staff; the business took a long time, the movements were nearly all carried out at a gallop, and ended with several charges at full speed. I was commanding a section in the centre, forming

part of the squadron under M. B——, near whom the colonel placed himself. They were, therefore, two paces in front of me, when the generals came forward to congratulate M. Moreau on the admirable style in which the manœuvres were carried out. But what did I see? The extreme rapidity of the movements which we had just made had deranged the symmetry of the additions which the captain and the colonel had made to their get-up. The false tail of the colonel's horse had become partly detached; the stump, composed of a plug of tow, was dragging almost on the ground, like a skein, while the false hair was up in the air, several feet higher, and spread out fan-shaped over the horse's croup, so that he seemed to have an enormous peacock's tail. As for M. B——'s sham calves, under the pressure of the saddle flaps they had slipped forward without his perceiving it, and presented a round lump on his shin bones, which produced a most comical effect; the captain all the while sitting proudly upright on his horse, as who should say, 'Look at me! What a handsome man I am!' At twenty years old one has not much gravity; mine was overcome by the grotesque spectacle which I had under my eyes, and, in spite of the imposing presence of three generals, I could not restrain myself from shouting wildly with laughter. I writhed on my saddle, I gnawed the sleeve of my jacket: it was no use; I laughed and laughed until my sides ached. Thereupon the inspector-general, not knowing the cause of my merriment, ordered me to fall out of the ranks and put myself under arrest. I obeyed, but, as I was obliged to pass between the horses of the colonel and of the captain, my eyes fell again, in spite of myself, on that infernal tail and also on the new-fashioned calves, and there I was again seized with an inextinguishable laugh which nothing could check. The generals must have thought that I was gone mad; but as soon as they had departed, the officers of the regiment, coming up to the colonel and Captain B——, soon knew what was the matter, and laughed like me—but at least with less danger to themselves.

That evening Major Blancheville was at a party at Mme.

Gudin's. General Bourcier, who happened to be there, having spoken of what he called my freak, M. Blancheville explained the cause of my irresistible fit of laughter. The generals, the ladies, and all the staff laughed till they cried at the story, and their gaiety redoubled at the entry of the handsome Captain B——, who, having replaced his false calves in the right position, came to show himself off in this brilliant company, without suspecting that he was one of the causes of its merriment. General Bourcier realised that if he had not been able to refrain from bursting with laughter at the mere description of the picture which I had had under my eyes, it was natural that a young sub-lieutenant should have been unable to contain himself when he was the witness of so ridiculous a spectacle. He remitted my arrest, and sent to fetch me at once. As soon as I entered the room the inspector-general and all the assembly went off in an immense shout of laughter, in which my recollection of the morning made me take a full share; and the mirth became crazy when M. B——, the only person who did not know the cause of it, was seen to go from one to the other, asking what it was all about, while everybody was looking at his calves.

CHAPTER XV

BUT let us come to more serious matters. The treaty of Lunéville had been followed by the Peace of Amiens, which closed the war between France and England. The First Consul resolved to profit by the tranquillity of Europe and the recovered freedom of the seas to send a numerous force to San Domingo with a view of freeing the island from the control of the blacks and their leader, Toussaint-Louverture.

Toussaint, without being in overt rebellion against the mother-country, had assumed great airs of independence. The expedition was to be commanded by General Leclerc, who was not without capacity, and had done well in Italy and in Egypt. His chief eminence, however, arose from his having married Pauline Bonaparte, sister of the First Consul. He was the son of a miller of Pontoise, if the name of miller may be applied to the rich owner of enormous mills, doing a very large trade. This miller had given a first-rate education to his son as well as to his daughter, who became the wife of General Davout.

While General Leclerc was getting ready for his departure, the forces destined for the expedition were assembled by the First Consul in Brittany, and, as was customary, these troops up till the day of their embarkation found themselves under the command of Bernadotte, commander-in-chief of the Army of the West. Now, as is well known, there was always a strong rivalry between the Armies of the Rhine and of Italy; the former were much attached to General Moreau, and had no love for General Bonaparte, whose rise to the head of the Government they had seen with regret. On his side the First Consul had a great preference for the soldiers who had fought with him in Italy and Egypt; and though his antagon-

ism to Moreau was no tas yet fully declared, he understood that it was to his interest to get the troops who were devoted to Moreau as far out of the way as possible. Accordingly the regiments intended for the expedition to San Domingo were nearly all selected from the Army of the Rhine. Thus separated from Moreau, they were very well satisfied to find themselves in Brittany under the command of Bernadotte, Moreau's old lieutenant, who had seen nearly all his service with them on the Rhine. The expedition was to consist of about 40,000 men; in the Army of the West proper there were an equal number. Thus Bernadotte, whose command extended over all the departments from the mouth of the Gironde to that of the Seine, was for the moment at the head of an army of 80,000 men, the majority of whom were much more attached to him than to the head of the Consular Government.

If Bernadotte had been a man of a stronger character the First Consul would have found reason to repent of having given him so important a command; for, as I can now state, without injuring anyone, and simply as an historical fact, Bernadotte conspired against the Government of which Bonaparte was the head. In regard to this conspiracy I will give some details, all the more interesting for never having been publicly known, perhaps not known even by Bonaparte himself.

Generals Bernadotte and Moreau, jealous of the First Consul's rise, and dissatisfied with the small share which he gave them in public affairs, had resolved to overthrow him and place themselves at the head of the Government, taking as assessor someone used to civil administration, or some clear-headed lawyer. To accomplish this end, Bernadotte, who, I must say, had a knack peculiar to himself of winning the affection of officers and soldiers, visited the provinces throughout his district, reviewing bodies of troops and employing every means to attach them more firmly to himself. Towards the subalterns he employed every kind of cajolery, money bribes, promises of promotion, while in private conversation with the chiefs he ran down the First Consul and his Govern-

ment. After having brought the great number of the regiments to disaffection, it became easy to drive them to revolt, those especially who were destined to the expedition to San Domingo and looked upon this service as a form of transportation.

Bernadotte's chief of the staff was a general of brigade named Simon—a man of ability but of weak character. Being enabled by his position to be in daily correspondence with the heads of regiments, he abused his opportunity to make his office the centre of the conspiracy. A major named Fourcart—whom you remember as a poor old sub-librarian with the Duke of Orleans, a place which I got him out of pity for his thirty years of misery—was then working under General Simon, and became his principal agent. Going from garrison to garrison under the guise of performing his duties, he organised a secret league, which was joined by nearly all the colonels and a great number of superior officers. Their opposition to the First Consul was stimulated by accusations that he was aspiring to the crown—an idea which would appear not to have come into his head as yet. It was arranged that the garrison of Rennes, consisting of several regiments, should start the movement, which would then spread like a train of powder through all the divisions of the army. As it was necessary that in this garrison some one regiment should be the first to declare and carry the others with it, the 82nd of the line was summoned to Rennes. Colonel Pinoteau, its commander, an able man, active and brave, but somewhat excitable under a phlegmatic exterior, was a creature of Bernadotte's, and one of the most eager leaders of the conspiracy. He undertook to arrange that his regiment, in which he was very popular, should be the first to declare.

All was ready for the explosion when Bernadotte's resolution failed. He wished, like a true Gascon, to get his chestnuts out of the fire with a cat's paw. So he persuaded General Simon and the principal conspirators that it was indispensable for him, in order that he might be in a position to seize the reins of government on the spot, after conferring with

Moreau and concerting plans on this important subject, to be in Paris at the moment when the deposition of the Consuls was proclaimed by the Army of Brittany. As a matter of fact Bernadotte wished, while reserving the power of profiting in the event of success, to avoid being compromised if the thing was a failure; and General Simon, no less than the other conspirators, was short-sighted enough not to see through the scheme. The day for the rising was therefore agreed upon, and he who had planned it and ought to have taken the lead was clever enough to get out of the way.

Before Bernadotte's departure for Paris, a proclamation was drawn up addressed to the people as well as to the army; many thousands of copies, got ready beforehand, were to be posted up on the eventful day. A bookseller of Rennes, to whom the secret of the conspirators had been imparted by General Simon and by Fourcart, undertook to print this proclamation himself. This was well to secure the prompt publication of it in Brittany. Bernadotte, however, desired to have a large number of copies of it in Paris, as it was important to publish it in the capital and throughout the provinces the moment that the Army of the West had raised the standard of revolt. There was, however, some danger in applying to a Paris printer; so Bernadotte, in order to have a number of the proclamations at hand without compromising himself, adopted the following course. He told my brother Adolphe (for whom he had just got a commission as lieutenant in the Legion of the Loire[1]) that he had his authority to accompany him to the capital, and that, as their stay there would be long, he advised him to bring his horse and dog-cart. My brother was delighted. He filled the 'boot' of his vehicle with luggage of all kinds, and entrusted the transport of it to his servant, who was to come by short stages, while Adolphe went off in the coach. As soon as my brother had started, General Simon and Major Fourcart stopped the servant on some pretence or other, opened the boot of the dog-cart, and took out the luggage, replacing it with parcels of the proclamation; then, having shut everything up again,

[1] Possibly a regiment of the National Guard.

they sent poor Joseph on his way, not dreaming what sort of luggage he was conveying.

Meanwhile the First Consul's police, which was just beginning to be well organised, had got wind of some plot going forward in the Army of Brittany, though they knew neither its objects nor the movers in it. The Minister of Police thought it his duty to warn the Prefect of Rennes, M. Mounier, who had been a famous orator in the Constituent Assembly. By an extraordinary chance the prefect received the despatch the very day the conspiracy was to break out at Rennes during parade. It was fixed for noon, and the time was now half-past eleven. M. Mounier, to whom the Minister had not been able to give any precise information, thought that in order to obtain it he could not do better in the absence of the commander-in-chief than apply to the staff. He sent word, therefore, to General Simon, begging him to come to his house, and showed him the Minister's despatch. General Simon, believing that everything was discovered, lost his head like any child, and told the prefect that in fact there did exist a widespread conspiracy in the army, that unhappily he had taken part in it, but that he now regretted it. Then, if you please, he unfolds the whole plan of the conspirators, names their leaders, and adds that in a few moments the troops assembled on the drill-ground are at a signal given by Colonel Pinoteau about to proclaim the overthrow of the Consular Government. Imagine the astonishment of M. Mounier! His position was by no means an easy one in presence of the guilty general, who, though he had been at the first moment bewildered, might come back to his senses and recollect that he had 80,000 men under his orders, of whom 8,000 or 10,000 were at that moment massed not far from the prefecture. The position of M. Mounier was most critical. He got out of it cleverly.

General Virion, of the gendarmerie, had been charged by the Government with the formation at Rennes of a body of infantry gendarmes, towards which every regiment of the army had contributed some grenadiers. These soldiers, having no common bond of union, were consequently outside

the influence of the colonels of the line, and recognised only the orders of their new chiefs, the officers of gendarmerie, who were themselves, according to the regulations, under the orders of the prefect. M. Mounier, therefore, sent instructions at once to General Virion, bidding him bring up all the gendarmes. Meanwhile, fearing lest General Simon should change his mind and should get away and put himself at the head of the troops, he coaxed him over with fair words, assuring him that his repentance and his confession would extenuate his fault in the eyes of the First Consul, and bade him surrender his sword and repair to the Tour Labat, escorted by the gendarmes, who at that moment arrived in the court. There, then, was the chief mover of the revolt in prison. While this was taking place at the prefecture, the troops of the line, massed on the drill-ground, were awaiting the hour of parade, which was also to be that of revolt. All the colonels were in the secret and had promised their assistance, except M. Godard of the 79th, and they hoped to see him follow the movement.

On what small things do the destinies of empires turn! Colonel Pinoteau, a thoroughly determined man, was to give the signal, and his regiment, the 82nd, already drawn up in line, was impatiently awaiting it; but Pinoteau, in combination with Fourcart, had been busy all the morning arranging for sending out the proclamations, and while thus preoccupied he had forgotten to shave himself. Noon struck. Colonel Pinoteau, on the point of starting for parade, perceived that his beard was not shaved, and hastened to do it; but while he was proceeding to this operation, General Virion, accompanied by a large number of gendarmerie officers, entered the room hurriedly, seized his sword, and, informing him that he was a prisoner, had him taken off to the tower where General Simon already was. A few minutes' delay and Colonel Pinoteau would have found himself at the head of 10,000 men, would certainly not have let himself be intimidated by the capture of General Simon, and would have accomplished his plan of revolt against the Consular Government; but he was surprised by General Virion, and what could he do? He had perforce to yield.

After making this second arrest, General Virion and the prefect despatched an aide-de-camp to the drill-ground, with orders to tell Colonel Godard of the 79th that they had a message from the First Consul to communicate to him at once. As soon as he joined them they told him of the discovery of the conspiracy, and of the arrests of General Simon and Colonel Pinoteau, and bade him unite with them to suppress the rebellion. Colonel Godard undertook the duty, returned to the drill-ground without letting anyone know what had just been imparted to him, gave his regiment the order to march on their right flank, and brought them to the Tour Labat, where he joined the gendarme battalions who were guarding it. There he found also General Virion and the prefect, who were causing cartridges to be distributed to the loyal troops, and they awaited the upshot of events.

Meanwhile, the officers of the regiments who were stationed on the drill-ground, astonished at the sudden departure of the 79th, and not able to conceive what was delaying Colonel Pinoteau, sent to his quarters, and learnt that he had just been taken to the tower. They were at the same time informed of the arrest of General Simon. The sensation was great. The officers of the various regiments held a consultation; Major Fourcart proposed to march at once and release the two prisoners, and afterwards to carry out the movement agreed on. The proposal was received with acclamation, especially by the 82nd, who adored Pinoteau. They hastened to the Tour Labat, but found it surrounded by 4,000 gendarmes and the battalions of the 79th. The assailants were no doubt more in number, but they had no cartridges, and even if they had had any, it would have been distasteful to many of them to fire on their comrades for the sake of merely bringing about a change of persons in the established Government. General Virion and the prefect harangued them, bidding them return to their duty. The soldiers wavered, and the leaders, seeing this, did not venture to give the signal for an attack with the bayonet, the only available means of action. The regiments fell out gradually

and retired to their barracks. Major Fourcart remained alone, and was taken to the tower; the poor printer also.

On learning that the insurrection at Rennes had been abortive, all the officers in the other regiments of the Army of Italy disavowed it; but the First Consul was not taken in by their protestations. He hurried on their embarkation for San Domingo, where nearly all came to their end either in battle or through the yellow fever.

Immediately on hearing General Simon's confession, although victory was not yet secure, M. Mounier had sent off an express messenger to the Government, and the First Consul debated whether he should have Bernadotte and Moreau arrested. He postponed this step for want of evidence, but in order to get it he gave orders that all travellers coming from Italy should be searched. While this was going on, the worthy Joseph arrived tranquilly at Versailles in my brother's dog-cart, and great was his surprise when he found himself collared by the gendarmes, and in spite of his protestations taken off to the Ministry of Police. You may suppose that on learning that the carriage which this man had brought belonged to one of Bernadotte's aides-de-camp, Fouché very soon had the boot opened. He found it full of proclamations, in which Bernadotte and Moreau, after speaking of the First Consul in very strong terms, announced his fall and their own accession to power. Bonaparte was furious, and sent for the two generals. Moreau said that he had no authority over the Army of the West, and declined all responsibility for the conduct of the regiments composing it. This objection, it must be admitted, had some force; but it made Bernadotte's position all the worse, since he, as commander-in-chief over all the troops in Brittany, was responsible for the maintenance of good order among them. Nevertheless, not only had his army conspired, but his chief of the staff was the manager of the undertaking, the rebel proclamations were signed 'Bernadotte,' and more than a thousand copies had just been seized in the carriage of his aide-de-camp. The First Consul thought that such clear evidence would crush and overwhelm Bernadotte; but he had to do with a

trebly-dyed Gascon as cunning as any three. Bernadotte professed surprise and indignation; 'he knew nothing of it, absolutely nothing. General Simon was a scoundrel, and Pinoteau another. He defied anyone to show him the original of the proclamation signed in his own hand. Was it any fault of his if some crazy fools had had his name printed beneath a proclamation? He disavowed it and the guilty authors of all these proceedings from the bottom of his soul, and yielded to no one in demanding their punishment.'

In point of fact Bernadotte had been clever enough to let General Simon conduct the whole business without putting into his hands a single word of writing which might compromise himself; thus reserving to himself the power of denying everything in the event of the conspiracy failing and General Simon accusing him of having had a share in it. The First Consul, though convinced of Bernadotte's guilt, had only half-proofs, and upon these his council of Ministers judged that it was impossible to base an indictment against a commander-in-chief whose name was very popular in the country and in the army. In the case of my brother Adolphe they were less particular. One fine night he was arrested in my mother's house, at a moment when she was already overwhelmed with grief. Her eldest brother, M. de Canrobert, who had been living quietly with her, had been imprisoned in the Temple upon a charge brought by some police agents of having been present at meetings held with a view of re-establishing the old Government. My mother was busied in taking all possible steps to prove his innocence when another and more terrible disaster befell her.

My two young brothers were being educated at the *Prytanée Français*. This establishment owned a large park and a country house at the village of Vanves, not far from the bank of the Seine, and during the summer the pupils used to go there for a few days' holiday. Those who had behaved well were allowed to bathe in the river. Now it happened that one week, on account of some schoolboy misdemeanour, the principal had issued a general prohibition of bathing. My brother Theodore was passionately

fond of this sport, so he and some others of his schoolfellows decided to enjoy it without the knowledge of their tutors. Accordingly, while the pupils were playing about the park, they climbed the wall at an out-of-the-way spot, and ran off towards the Seine. The day was very hot, and they were streaming with perspiration when they leapt into the stream. Hardly were they in the water when they heard the drum beat for dinner. Fearing that their absence from the dining-room would reveal their escapade, they dressed in all haste, ran back, climbed the wall again, and arrived panting just as dinner was beginning. In these circumstances they would have done well to eat little or nothing; but schoolboys do not think of such things. They made a hearty meal as usual, and were all taken seriously ill—Theodore worst of all. He was seized with violent inflammation, and carried to his mother's house in a hopeless state, and it was while she was going from the bedside of her dying son to the prison of her brother that they arrested her eldest son. As a final stroke of disaster, poor Theodore died. He was eighteen years old, an excellent lad, his disposition as gentle as his frame was fine. I was deeply grieved to hear of his death, for I loved him dearly. The disasters which fell in succession on my mother led those who had been my father's truest friends to take all the more interest in her. First among these was the kind M. Defermon, who was working almost every day with the First Consul, and never lost an opportunity of interceding for Adolphe, and more especially for his mother in her trouble. Finally, Bonaparte replied one day that though he had no very high opinion of Bernadotte's good sense he did not believe him to be so devoid of judgment as to take a lieutenant twenty-one years old into his confidence when conspiring against the Government. Moreover, General Simon had declared that it was he and Major Fourcart who had put the proclamations into the boot of young Marbot's dog-cart. Consequently, if he were to blame he could not be very seriously so, but that he himself did not intend to release Bernadotte's aide-de-camp until Bernadotte came in person to request it.

On learning Bonaparte's resolve my mother hastened to

Bernadotte to entreat him to comply with this condition. He promised faithfully to do so, but days and weeks went by and he did nothing. Finally, he said to my mother, 'It will cost me a great deal to do what you ask, but no matter; I owe thus much to the memory of your husband, and to the interest which I feel towards your children. I will go this very evening to the First Consul, and call upon you when I leave the Tuileries. I feel certain that I shall at last be able to announce to you the release of your son.' It may be imagined with what impatience my mother waited during this long day, her heart beating at the sound of every carriage. At last eleven o'clock struck. No Bernadotte appeared. My mother went to his house and learnt that Bernadotte and his wife had just started for Plombières, and were not expected back for two months. For all his promise, Bernadotte had left Paris without seeing the First Consul! My mother, in despair, wrote to General Bonaparte. M. Defermon undertook to deliver the letter; and in his indignation at Bernadotte's conduct he could not refrain from recounting his behaviour towards us. Bonaparte exclaimed, 'Bernadotte all over!'

M. Défermon and Generals Montier, Lefebvre, and Murat pressed strongly for my brother's release, pointing out that if he had known nothing of the conspiracy it was unjust to keep him in prison, while if he had had any knowledge of it he could not be required to inform against Bernadotte, whose aide-de-camp he was. The First Consul was struck by these arguments, restored my brother to liberty, and sent him to join the 49th Regiment at Cherbourg, not choosing that he should be Bernadotte's aide-de-camp any longer; but probably, with the mnemonic system peculiar to himself, he entered in his head the words, 'Marbot, aide-de-camp to Bernadotte—Rennes conspiracy.' Anyhow, my brother never got back into favour with him, and some time later he was sent to Pondicherry.

Adolphe had passed a month in prison; Major Fourcart remained there a year, was cashiered, and ordered to leave France. He took refuge in Holland, where he lived for

thirty years in a state of penury, reduced to giving lessons in French. Ultimately, in 1832, he thought of returning to his country, and one day during the siege of Antwerp I saw a kind of threadbare old schoolmaster enter my room, whom I recognised for Fourcart. He confessed that he had not a sixpence. While offering to help him I could not refrain from philosophic reflections on the strange ways of fortune. There was a man who in 1802 was already a major, and whom his courage combined with his ability would certainly have advanced to the rank of general if it had not occurred to Colonel Pinoteau to shave himself at the moment when the conspiracy of Rennes was on the point of breaking out! I brought Fourcart to Marshal Gérard, who also remembered him; we introduced him to the Duke of Orleans, who was good enough to give him a post in his library, with a salary of 2,400 francs. He lived fifteen years there.

As for General Simon and Colonel Pinoteau, they were sent to the island of Ré and confined there five or six years, until Bonaparte, on becoming emperor, set them free. Pinoteau vegetated a little time at Ruffec, his native town, until the Emperor, on his way to Spain in 1808, halted there to change horses. Colonel Pinoteau presented himself without flinching, and demanded to re-enter the service. The Emperor, knowing that he was an excellent officer, put him in command of a regiment. The admirable way in which he led this during the Spanish war earned him, after several campaigns, the rank of major-general.

General Simon also was restored to the service. He commanded a brigade of infantry in Masséna's army when we invaded Portugal in 1810. At the battle of Busaco, when Masséna made the blunder of delivering a front attack on Lord Wellington's army, posted on a height very difficult of access, poor General Simon, wishing to wipe out his fault and recover the time which he had lost to his promotion, dashed forward bravely at the head of his brigade, cleared all the obstacles, climbed the rocks under a hail of bullets, broke the English line, and was the first to enter the enemy's entrenchments. There, however, a shot fired point-blank

smashed his jaw, just at the moment when the English second line repulsed our troops, who were hurled back into the valley with considerable loss. The unfortunate general was found lying in the redoubt among the dead and dying, with scarcely a human feature left. Wellington treated him with much kindness, and, as soon as he was fit to be moved, sent him as a prisoner of war to England. Later on he was allowed to return to France, but his horrible wound did not permit him to serve again. The Emperor gave him a pension, and nothing more was heard of him.

CHAPTER XVI

AFTER the blow which had fallen upon her my mother was very anxious to have her three remaining sons at her side. My eldest brother, having been ordered to join the expedition which the Government was sending to the East Indies under the command of General Decaen, was able to get leave to spend two months with her. Felix was at the Prytanée; and a lucky chance brought me also to Paris. The cavalry school was then at Versailles. Every regiment sent to it an officer and a non-commissioned officer, who, after completing their course, returned to impart what they had learnt to the regiment. Now it so happened that, just as I was about to ask leave to go to Paris, the lieutenant of our regiment who was detached to the cavalry school had finished his course, and our colonel proposed that I should take his place. I accepted it with joy, for it gave me not only the opportunity of seeing my mother again, but the certainty of passing a year or more within easy reach of her. My preparations were soon made. I sold my horse, took the coach, and left the 25th Chasseurs, which I was never to join again, though as I did not then know this my farewell of my comrades was not very melancholy. On arriving at Paris I found my mother in great affliction, on account not only of the cruel loss which we had just sustained, but also of the approaching departure of Adolphe for India and the imprisonment of my uncle Canrobert, to which we could see no end. We passed a month together, after which my brother went to Brest to embark on the 'Marengo' for Pondicherry; while I went to the cavalry school, which was in barracks at the great stables of Versailles.

I was lodged on the first floor, in apartments formerly

occupied by Prince de Lambesc, the grand equerry. I had a very large bedroom and an immense sitting-room, looking on the Avenue of Paris and the Place d'Armes. I was at first surprised that they should have treated the last-arrived pupil so well; but I soon learnt that nobody would have these rooms, on account of their immense size, which made them truly icy, while very few of the officer-pupils could afford a fire. Fortunately I was not reduced to that point; I had a good stove set up, and with a large screen I made a little chamber in the vast room. I was able to furnish this tolerably, though they only provided us with a bed, a table, and two chairs, which was little enough for the vast space of my quarters. However, I settled myself very comfortably, and when spring came round my rooms were charming. You must not suppose that though we were called pupils we were treated as schoolboys; we were left free, even too free. We were commanded by an old colonel, M. Maurice, whom we hardly ever saw, and who never interfered. Three days a week we had ordinary riding-school under the celebrated riding-masters Jardin and Coupé, and we went to it whenever we thought fit. In the afternoon, an excellent veterinary, M. Valois, gave lessons in horse-doctoring, but the pupils were under no compulsion to study with diligence. The other three days were devoted to the military side; in the morning regulation riding-school, under the only two captains of the school, and in the afternoon lectures by them on the theory. As soon as the exercises were over we saw no more of the captains, and every pupil went where he pleased. It required a considerable wish to learn if one was to get on in a school so slackly kept, and yet most of the pupils made good progress, from fear of not being equal to their duties when they returned as instructors to their regiments. Still the work that they did fell very far short of what is now done at the school of Saumur. As for their general conduct, so long as they caused no disturbance within the establishment, they were left to do what they liked. There was no roll-call, they went out when they pleased, took their meals when they pleased, slept out, and even went to Paris without asking leave. The non-

commissioned officers had rather less liberty; two pretty strict drill-sergeants looked after them and compelled them to be in barracks by ten o'clock. As each of us wore the uniform of his regiment, the school, when assembled, presented a curious though interesting spectacle; for when on the first day of each month we were passed in review in order to check our pay-sheets, every uniform of the French cavalry might be seen. As we belonged to different corps, and were only brought together for the limited time of our course, it was impossible for the *camaraderie* which makes the charm of regimental life to exist among us. Our numbers, ninety in all, were too great for the establishment of much intimacy; there were sets, but no close friendships; nor did I feel any need for close society with my new comrades. Every Saturday I went to Paris, where I passed all Sunday and a good part of Monday with my mother. At Versailles there were two old friends of hers, the Comtesses de Châteauville, with whom I used to pass two or three evenings a week. My other evenings I employed in reading, of which I have always been fond; colleges may set a man on the road of education, but he must finish it himself by reading. What a delight it was in the middle of a severe winter to return to my rooms after dinner, make a good fire, and there, intrenched in solitude behind my screen, with my little lamp in front of me, to read till eight or nine o'clock! Then I used to go to bed to save firewood, and continue my reading till midnight. In this way I read over Tacitus, Xenophon, and nearly all the classical Greek and Latin authors; I went through the history of Rome, of France, and of the principal states of Europe. Thus my time passed very agreeably, divided between my mother, my school exercises, a little good society, and my beloved books.

I was at Versailles when the year 1803 opened. As spring came on my daily life was somewhat modified. All the officer-pupils had horses of their own; and I devoted a part of my evenings to long rides in the noble woods about Versailles, Marly, and Meudon.

During May, my mother had the satisfaction of seeing

her eldest brother, M. de Canrobert, released from the Temple; while the other two, M. de l'Isle and M. de la Coste, were struck out of the list of *émigrés*, returned to France, and came to Paris. The eldest of my mother's brothers, M. Certain de Canrobert, was a man of good parts and a most amiable disposition. He entered the service very young as sub-lieutenant in the Penthièvre infantry regiment, and distinguished himself in the Corsican war. At the conclusion of this he returned to France, obtained the Cross of St. Louis at the completion of twenty-four years of service, and retired with the rank of captain on marrying Mademoiselle de Sanguinet. He became father of a son and a daughter, and was living happily in his manor of Laval de Cère when the Revolution of 1789 broke out. Being threatened with the scaffold, he was compelled to go abroad. His goods were confiscated and sold, and his wife with her two young children put in prison. My mother obtained permission to go and visit her, and found her in a cold damp tower, suffering from fever, of which her little girl died that very day. By dint of going to one person and another with her petition, my mother obtained her sister-in-law's release; she died, however, a few days later of the illness caught in the prison. My mother took charge of the little boy, named Antoine; he was in due course sent to college, then to the Ecole Militaire, of which he was one of the best pupils. Finally, this worthy half-brother of Marcellin de Canrobert became an infantry officer, and died bravely on the field of Waterloo. My uncle was one of the first *émigrés* who under the Consulate obtained leave to return to France. He got back some portion of his property, and married a daughter of an old family friend, M. Niocel. The second Madame de Canrobert became mother of our excellent and brave cousin Marcellin de Canrobert,[1] who has so often distinguished himself in Africa, and is to-day colonel of Zouaves. How proud would his father have been of such a son had he not died too soon to witness his success!

M. Certain de l'Isle, second brother of my mother, was

[1] Now Marshal.

one of the handsomest men in France. The Revolution found him a lieutenant also in the Penthièvre regiment. He followed the example of nearly all his comrades and went abroad, in company with his youngest brother, M. Certain de la Coste, who served in the King's bodyguard. After leaving France the two brothers never separated. At first they withdrew to Baden, but their repose was soon disturbed by the French armies passing the Rhine. As, in pursuance of a decree of the Convention, every *émigré* who fell into their power was shot, my uncles were obliged in all haste to push farther into Germany. Want of money compelled them to travel on foot, which soon knocked up poor la Coste. They found great difficulties in getting lodging, for everything was occupied by Austrian soldiers. La Coste fell ill, but, with his brother's support, reached a little town in Wurtemberg, where they entered a wretched inn and found a closet and a bed. At daybreak they saw the Austrians depart, and learnt that the French were about to occupy the town. La Coste, unable to move, bade de l'Isle provide for his own safety and leave him to the protection of God. De l'Isle declared in so many words that he would not abandon his dying brother. Meanwhile two French volunteers presented themselves at the inn with a billet. The landlord showed them to the closet occupied by my uncles, informing these that they would have to go elsewhere. It was truly said that during the Revolution French honour had taken refuge in the armies. The two soldiers, seeing la Coste apparently at the point of death, not only declared to the landlord that he should stay with them, but also demanded a large room on the first floor with several beds, where they established themselves with my two uncles. In an enemy's country the conqueror is the master. The landlord obeyed the two French volunteers, who, during a fortnight that their battalion was quartered in the town, took infinite care of MM. de la Coste and de l'Isle. They made them share the good meals which, according to the practice of war, their host was obliged to furnish; and this comfortable diet, together with the rest, restored la Coste to a measure of health. At

parting, the volunteers, who belonged to a battalion from the Gironde, wishing to give their new friends a means of passing through the French columns without being arrested, took from their uniforms the metal buttons bearing the name of their battalion, and attached them to my uncles' civilian clothes, enabling them thus to pass themselves off as belonging to the commissariat. With this new-fashioned passport they traversed all the French cantonments without arousing any suspicion. They reached Prussia, and established themselves in the town of Halle, where M. de l'Isle found opportunities of giving lessons. They lived there peaceably till 1803, when my mother succeeded in getting them struck off the list of *émigrés*, and after twelve years of exile my two uncles returned to France.

CHAPTER XVII

But to return to Versailles. While I was going through the course of the cavalry school great events were toward in Europe. England having been led by jealousy of the prosperity of France to break the Peace of Amiens,[1] hostilities recommenced. The First Consul determined to push them actively forward by transporting an army to the soil of Great Britain—a daring operation, very difficult, but still not impossible. In order to carry it out, Napoleon, who had just seized Hanover, the special patrimony of England, formed several army corps on the coast of the North Sea and the Channel. He ordered an immense quantity of pinnaces and flat-bottomed boats for the embarkation of the troops to be built and collected at Boulogne and the neighbouring ports.

All the military world being stirred to activity for this war, I regretted that I could not take a share in it, and I understood what a false position I should be placed in at the renewal of hostilities. For, destined as I was to convey to my regiment the instruction which I had acquired in the cavalry school, I saw myself condemned to pass years at a dépôt, whip in hand, making recruits trot on old horses, while my comrades were serving at the head of the troopers whom I had trained. The prospect was not very agreeable; but how was I to change? A regiment must always be supplied by recruits, and it was certain that my colonel, having sent me to the cavalry school in order to learn to drill recruits, would not deprive himself of the services which I could render in this kind, and would exclude me from his fighting

[1] The question with whom rested the blame for the rupture of the short peace is one too complicated to be discussed here. Whether or not the technical fault was with England, readers of this book will probably admit that until Napoleon was crushed no permanent peace was possible.

squadrons. I was in this perplexity, when one day, as I was walking at the end of the Avenue of Paris with a book on the Theory in my hand, a bright idea occurred to me which totally changed my destiny and aided vastly to raise me to the rank which I hold.

I had just learnt that the First Consul, having fault to find with the Court of Lisbon, had given orders to form at Bayonne an army corps which was intended to enter Portugal under Augereau as commander-in-chief. I knew that this general owed his promotion partly to my father, under whom he had served at the camp of Toulon and in the Pyrenees; and although the experience which I had gained at Genoa after my father's death was not calculated to give me a good opinion of man's gratitude, I resolved to write to Augereau informing him of my position, and begging him to deliver me from it by taking me for one of his aides-de-camp. I wrote my letter and sent it to my mother to obtain her approval. She not only assented, but, knowing that Augereau was in Paris, kindly took it to him herself. Augereau received the widow of his friend with the utmost courtesy; he at once drove off to the Minister of War, and that very evening brought to my mother my appointment as aide-de-camp. Thus was fulfilled the wish which four-and-twenty hours before I had considered a dream. The next day I hastened to thank the general; he received me most kindly, and ordered me to come and join him as soon as possible at Bayonne, whither he was proceeding immediately. It was the month of October, so that I had finished the first course at the cavalry school; and, having little curiosity to pursue the second, I left Versailles with joy. I had a presentiment that I was starting in a new direction, and one much more profitable than that of regimental instructor; nor was I deceived, for nine years later I was colonel, while my comrades whom I had left at the school had scarcely got their troops.

I repaired promptly to Bayonne, where I took up my duty as aide-de-camp to the commander-in-chief. He was occupying the fine château of Marac, not far from the town, where some years afterwards the Emperor resided. I was

well received by the general and by my new comrades his aides-de-camp, who had nearly all served under my father. This staff, although it did not give so many general officers to the army as that of Bernadotte, was very well composed. General Donzelot, chief of the staff, was a very capable man, and afterwards became governor of the Ionian Islands, and then of Martinique. The deputy chief of the staff was named Colonel Albert; he died a general, and aide-de-camp to the Duke of Orleans. The aides were Colonel Sicard, who was killed at Heilsberg, Major Brame, and Major Massy, who was killed when colonel at the Moskowa; Captain Chévetel, and Lieutenant Mainvielle; I was the sixth and the junior. The staff was completed by Dr. Raymond, an excellent practitioner and a most honourable man, who was of great assistance to me at the battle of Eylau. The marshal's half-brother, Colonel Augereau, accompanied the staff. He was a kindly man, who afterwards became lieutenant-general.

I must now give some account of Marshal Augereau's history. Most of the generals who became celebrated in the early wars of the Revolution rose from the lower ranks of society; but it is wrong to imagine, as some have done, that they were without education and owed their success to nothing but their brilliant courage. Augereau especially has been much misjudged. People have thought fit to represent him as a kind of rough, noisy, ill-conditioned swashbuckler. This is a mistake; for, although his youth was pretty stormy, and though he fell into sundry errors in politics, he was kind, well-mannered, and affectionate. I can assert that of the five marshals under whom I served he was distinctly the one who did most to alleviate the evils of war, who showed most kindness to non-combatants, and treated his officers the best, living with them like a father among his children. He had an extremely disturbed life, but before judging him one must consider the manners and customs of the period.

Pierre Augereau was born in Paris in 1757. His father did a large business as a fruiterer, and had amassed a sufficient fortune to enable him to educate his children well. His

mother was a native of Munich, and she had the good sense always to speak German to her son, so that he spoke it perfectly, which both in his travels and in war was of great use to him. Augereau was a handsome man, tall and well built. He was fond of all physical exercises, and a proficient at them: a good rider, and an excellent swordsman. At the age of seventeen he lost his mother, and her brother, who was one of the secretaries of 'Monsieur,' obtained his enlistment in the carabineers, of which that prince was proprietary colonel. He passed some years at Saumur, the regular garrison of the carabineers. His attention to duty and his good conduct soon raised him to the rank of non-commissioned officer. Unfortunately, at that time there was a craze for duelling, and Augereau's reputation as an excellent fencer compelled him to fight often, for among the garrison it was the correct thing to allow no superior. Noblemen, officers, soldiers, used to fight on the most futile grounds. Thus it happened that on one occasion, when Augereau was on a long leave in Paris, the celebrated fencing-master Saint-Georges, seeing him pass, said in the presence of several swordsmen that 'there went one of the best blades in France.' Thereupon a sergeant of dragoons named Belair, who claimed to be the next best to Saint-Georges, wrote to Augereau that he should like to fight him unless the other would admit his superiority. Augereau answered that he would do nothing of the sort, so they met in the Champs Elysées, and Belair got a thrust right through the body. He recovered, and, having left the service, married and became father of eight children. In the early days of the Empire, being at a loss how to feed them, it occurred to him to apply to his old adversary, now become a marshal. I knew the man; he was witty and gay in a very original fashion. He called upon Augereau with a fiddle under his arm, and said that, having nothing to give his eight children for dinner, he was going to make them dance to keep up their spirits unless the marshal would kindly give him the means of supplying them with more substantial nourishment. Augereau recognised Belair, asked him to dinner, gave him money, and in a few days obtained him a very good post in the

Government Parcels Office, and got two of his sons into a *lycée*. This conduct needs no remark.

All Augereau's duels did not end thus. According to a most absurd usage, ancient feuds existed between certain regiments, the cause of which was often pretty much forgotten, but which were handed down from one generation to another, and gave rise to duels whenever those corps met. Thus the Lunéville gendarmes and the carabineers had been at war for more than half a century, although in all this period they had not seen each other. At last, at the beginning of Louis XVI.'s reign, these two bodies were summoned to the camp at Compiègne; so to show that they were no less brave than their predecessors, carabineers and gendarmes resolved to fight, and the custom was of such ancient date that the chiefs felt bound to wink at it. However, in order to avoid too great bloodshed, they contrived to make a regulation that there should be only one duel. Each corps was to appoint a combatant to represent it, and after that there should be a truce. As the self-esteem of each side required that the selected champion should be victorious, the carabineers picked out their twelve best swordsmen, Augereau being among them, and it was agreed to choose by lot the one to whom the honour of the regiment should be entrusted. The lot was that day even blinder than usual, for it fell upon a sergeant named Donnadieu who had five children. Augereau remarked that they ought not to have put among the papers one bearing the name of a father of a family, and demanded to act as his substitute. Donnadieu declared that as the lot had fallen on him he would go out; Augereau insisted. At last the generous contest was terminated by the meeting accepting Augereau's proposal. They soon learnt who was the combatant chosen by the gendarmes, and it only remained to bring the adversaries together, so that a shadow of a quarrel might furnish a pretext for the meeting.

Augereau's adversary was a terrible man, an excellent swordsman and a professional duellist, who, to keep his hand in while waiting, had in the previous days killed two sergeants of the Garde Française. Augereau, without letting

himself be frightened by this bully's reputation, went off to the café, where he knew that he would come, and sat down at a table to wait for him. The gendarme entered, and as soon as the carabineers' champion was pointed out to him he turned up his coat-tails and sat down insolently on the table with his hind-quarters a foot from Augereau's face. The latter was at this moment taking a cup of very hot coffee; he gently opened the slit which in those days existed in the waistband of the leather breeches worn by the cavalry, and poured the scalding liquid upon the person of the impertinent gendarme. The man turned round in a fury. The quarrel was started, and they went off to the ground, followed by a crowd of carabineers and gendarmes. On the way the gendarme, by way of a ferocious raillery of his intended victim, asked Augereau in a jeering tone, 'Would you rather be buried in the town or in the country?' Augereau replied, 'I prefer the country, I have always liked the open air.' 'Very good,' said the gendarme, turning to his second, 'you may put him beside the two whom I packed off yesterday and the day before.' This was not very encouraging, and might have shaken the nerves of another than Augereau. It was not so with him. Resolved to defend his life to the best of his power, he played so close and so well that his adversary, enraged at being unable to touch him, lost his temper and blundered. Augereau, always calm, profited by this to run him through, remarking, 'You shall be buried in the country.'

When the camp was broken up the carabineers returned to Saumur, where Augereau continued to serve quietly until a disastrous event drove him into a life of adventure. A young officer of high birth and very hasty temper, happening to find some fault with the manner in which the horses were groomed, fell foul of Augereau, and in a fit of anger offered to strike him with his whip in presence of the whole squadron. Augereau replied to the insult by sending the imprudent officer's whip flying from his hand. In a rage he drew his sword and attacked Augereau, saying, 'Defend yourself!' Augereau at first confined himself to parrying, but, having been wounded, he at length returned a thrust, and

the officer fell dead. General Count de Malseigne, who commanded the carabineers as deputy for 'Monsieur,' was soon informed of this affair; and although the eye-witnesses with one accord testified that Augereau had been most unjustly provoked, and that it was a case of lawful self-defence, the interest which he took in Augereau led him to think it advisable to get him out of the way. He therefore summoned a soldier named Papon, a native of Geneva, whose time expired in a few days, and asked him to let Augereau have his paper of discharge, promising him another shortly. Papon agreed, for which Augereau was always most grateful to him. Having reached Geneva, he learnt that in spite of the evidence a court-martial had condemned him to death for having drawn his sword on an officer.

The Papon family exported watches largely to the East. Augereau resolved to accompany the clerk who was sent in charge of them, and thus visited Greece, the Ionian Islands, Constantinople, and the shores of the Black Sea. When he was in the Crimea a Russian colonel, judging from his fine bearing that he had been a soldier, offered him the rank of sergeant. Augereau accepted, and passed some years in the Russian army, serving under Souvaroff against the Turks, and being wounded at the assault on Ismail. Peace having been made between Russia and the Porte, Augereau's regiment was ordered to Poland; but, not caring to stay longer among the Russians, half-barbarous as they were, he deserted and reached Prussia. There he took service, at first in Prince Henry's regiment; later on his stature and his pleasing countenance gained him admission into Frederick the Great's celebrated regiment of guards. He was there for two years, and his captain held out hopes of promotion to him, when one day the King, reviewing his guards, stopped in front of Augereau. 'There is a fine grenadier: what countryman is he?' said the King. 'A Frenchman, sir.' 'So much the worse,' replied Frederick, who had come to hate the French as much as he once liked them; 'so much the worse. If he had been a Swiss or a German, we might have made something of him.'

After this assurance from the King's mouth that he

would never come to anything in Prussia he decided to leave the country: not an easy thing to do, for every desertion was signalled by a cannon-shot, and the populace at once pursued in order to get the reward, while the deserter when taken was shot. To avoid this misfortune and regain his liberty, Augereau, knowing well that a good third of the guards who were foreigners like himself longed for nothing better than to get out of Prussia, got speech of some sixty of the boldest, and pointed out that if they deserted individually they were lost, as two or three men were quite able to arrest one. The right thing was for them all to go off together with arms and ammunition, so as to be able to defend themselves. They acted accordingly, Augereau taking command. Though attacked on the road by the peasants, and even by a detachment of soldiers, these determined men, with loss of some of their numbers, but with greater loss to their assailants, reached in one night a small place belonging to Saxony, not more than ten leagues from Potsdam.[1] Augereau went on to Dresden, where he gave dancing and fencing lessons until the birth of Louis XVI.'s eldest son. The French Government celebrated this event by an amnesty to all deserters, which enabled Augereau not only to return to Paris, but also to re-enter the carabineers. His sentence was quashed, and General de Malseigne claimed him back as one of the best sergeants in the regiment. Augereau thus recovered his rank and his position. In 1788 the King of Naples, feeling the necessity of reform in his army, asked the King of France to send him as instructors some officers and non-commissioned officers, promising them an advance in rank. Augereau was among those selected, and on arriving at Naples received the rank of sub-lieutenant. He served there several years, and had just become lieutenant, when he fell in love with the daughter of a Greek merchant. The father being unwilling to agree to his proposal, they got secretly married; then, going on board the first ship that they found starting, they went to Lisbon, where they lived quietly for some time.

[1] The northern frontier of the Electorate of Saxony reached at that time to within a very short distance of Potsdam.

By the end of 1792 the French Revolution had made great progress, and all the sovereigns of Europe, dreading to see the new principles introduced into their states, began to take severe measures towards Frenchmen. Augereau has often told me that during his stay in Portugal he had never said or done anything which could alarm the Government; nevertheless he was arrested and imprisoned by the Inquisition. He had lain some months in prison, when Madame Augereau saw one day a ship enter the port with a tricolour flag; she went on board and handed to the captain a letter informing the French Government of her husband's arbitrary arrest. The French skipper did not belong to the navy, but nevertheless he went boldly to the Portuguese Ministers, claimed his compatriot who was detained by the Inquisition, and on their refusal to give him up declared war upon them in the name of France. Whether it was that the Portuguese were frightened or that they understood the injustice of their action, Augereau was released, and with his wife returned to Havre in the brave skipper's vessel.

On arriving in Paris Augereau was promoted captain and sent to La Vendée. There, by his advice and his courage, he saved the army of the incapable General Ronsin, earning thereby the rank of major. Sick of fighting against Frenchmen, he asked permission to go to the Pyrenees, and was sent to the camp at Toulouse, then commanded by my father, who, struck with the way in which he performed his duty, got him the post of divisional-adjutant with colonel's rank and showed him much kindness, which Augereau never forgot. As general he distinguished himself in the wars in Spain and in Italy, especially at Castiglione. On the eve of this battle the French army was surrounded on all sides, and in a very critical position. Bonaparte, who was commanding in chief, summoned a council of war, for the only time in his life. All the generals, even Masséna, were in favour of retreating, until Augereau, pointing out the way of escaping from the difficulty, ended by saying: 'Were you all to go, I shall remain, and with my division shall attack the enemy at daybreak.' Bonaparte, struck by Augereau's arguments, said,

'Very well, I will stay with you.' After that there was no more talk of retreat, and on the morrow a brilliant victory, due in great part to the valour and the fine tactics of Augereau, assured the position of the French army in Italy for a long time. So it was that when certain jealous tongues thought fit to slander Augereau in the presence of the Emperor, he answered, 'Let us not forget that he saved us at Castiglione,' and when he created his new nobility he named Augereau Duke of Castiglione.

On the death of General Hoche Augereau took his place with the Army of the Rhine, and after the establishment of the Consulate he was put in command of the Gallo-Batavian Army, composed of French and Dutch troops, with which he fought the campaign of 1800 in Franconia, and won the battle of Burg-Eberach. After the Peace he bought the estate and château of La Houssaye. With reference to this purchase, I may say that there has been much exaggeration of the fortunes made by some generals of the Army of Italy. After drawing for twenty years the pay of commander-in-chief or marshal, and enjoying for seven years an annuity of 200,000 francs, and a salary of 25,000 francs with the Legion of Honour, Augereau left at his death only the capital of 48,000 francs a year. Never was man more generous, more disinterested, more ready to do a kindness. I could quote many instances of it, but I will confine myself to two.

After his elevation to the Consulate General Bonaparte formed a numerous guard, the infantry of which he placed under the command of General Lannes. He, though a most distinguished soldier, had no idea of administration; so, instead of keeping to the established rate for the purchase of cloth, linen, and such-like, thought that nothing could be good enough for his men. Consequently the officials of the clothing department, delighted at being able to deal with the purveyors by private contract in order to obtain their commissions, and further, thinking that the name of General Lannes, friend of the First Consul, would cover any amount of plundering, designed the uniforms in such luxurious style

that when it came to paying the bills they were found to be 300,000 francs in excess of the sum allowed by the official regulations. The First Consul, who had resolved to bring the finances into order, and to compel the commanders of regiments not to exceed the credits sanctioned, was determined to make an example. Fond as he was of Lannes, and though convinced that not a centime had got into his pocket, he declared him responsible for the deficit of 300,000 francs, and allowed him only eight days to pay this sum into the regimental chest, under pain of being brought before a court-martial. This severe decision produced an excellent effect, putting a stop to the waste which had been going on in regimental expenditure. But Lannes, although recently married to the daughter of Senator Guéhéneuc, found it impossible to pay. Then Augereau, learning his friend's awkward position, hurried to his solicitor, got 300,000 francs, and told his secretary to pay them in the name of General Lannes into the regimental chest of the Guard. The First Consul, when he heard of this, was most grateful to Augereau, and in order to put Lannes in a position to be able to discharge his debt he gave him the very well-paid embassy to Lisbon.

Another instance of Augereau's generosity was the following. Bernadotte, with whom he was not very intimate, had bought the estate of Lagrange. He had reckoned on paying it out of his wife's dowry; but there was some delay in obtaining this in full, and the vendors pressed for payment. He therefore asked Augereau to lend him 200,000 francs for five years, which Augereau agreed to do. Madame Bernadotte bethought her of asking what interest he would require. 'Madam,' answered Augereau, 'bankers and moneylenders, no doubt quite rightly, draw profit from the money which they lend; but when a marshal is fortunate enough to be able to oblige a comrade, the pleasure of doing him a service is interest enough for him.' That was the man who has been represented as hard and grasping. I will not at the present moment relate any more of his life; the rest of his career will be told as I go along; and having made known his good qualities, I shall not conceal his faults.

CHAPTER XVIII

LET us return to Bayonne, where I had just joined Augereau's staff. The winter in those parts is very mild, so that the troops in camp were able to manœuvre and have sham fights, to practise us for our coming battles with the Portuguese. But the Court of Lisbon fell in with the views of the French Government on all points; so we had no occasion to cross the Pyrenees, and Augereau was ordered to Brest, there to take command of the 7th corps of the Coast Army, which was to bring off an invasion of Ireland.

General Augereau's first wife, the Greek lady, was then at Pau, and, wishing to take leave of her, he went thither with three aides-de-camp, I being one. At that time, commanders-in-chief had each his squadron of *guides*, by a detachment of whom their carriages were constantly escorted so long as they were in the district occupied by troops under their command. There being as yet no *guides* at Bayonne, their place was supplied by posting a detachment of cavalry at every station between Bayonne and Pau. This duty was done by my late regiment, the 25th Chasseurs; so that as I sat at my ease in the commander-in-chief's carriage I could see my former comrades trotting by the side of it. This did not excite my vanity, but I admit that on entering Puyoo, where two years ago you saw me come in on foot, all muddy, and escorted by gendarmes, I could not help swaggering a little to attract the recognition of the good mayor Bordenave. I introduced him to the commander-in-chief, to whom I had already related what had befallen me in this parish in 1801, and as the escort as far as Puyoo had been joined by the gendarmerie force from Peyrehorade, I recognised the two gendarmes who had arrested me. The old mayor mischievously told them that

the officer whom they saw in the commander-in-chief's fine coach was the same traveller as they had taken up for a deserter in spite of his papers being in order; the good man was indeed very proud of the judgment which he had given on that occasion.

We stayed twenty-four hours at Pau, and returned to Bayonne, whence the general despatched Mainvielle and me to Brest to get his quarters ready. We travelled by the mail as far as Bordeaux, but from that point there were no public conveyances, and we were obliged to bestride post-horses, which, of all ways of travelling, is certainly the roughest. It rained, the roads were fearful, the nights pitch-dark, and still we had to gallop ahead in spite of these hindrances, for our mission was urgent. I have never been a first-rate rider, but my practice on horseback and the year that I had just passed at the Versailles riding-school gave me sufficient confidence to enable me to push along the frightful screws which we were obliged to ride. I got pretty well therefore through my apprenticeship to the trade of mounted messenger, which you will see that I was forced by circumstances later on to learn thoroughly. Mainvielle was not so well off, so that it took us two days and two nights to reach Nantes, where he arrived utterly broken down and unable to ride post any farther. However, as we could not allow the commander-in-chief to find himself without lodging on his arrival at Brest, it was arranged that I should go on to that town, and that Mainvielle should rejoin me by carriage. On arriving I hired the house of the banker Pasquier, the brother of the former Chancellor and President of the Upper House. My comrades, including Mainvielle, soon joined me and helped me to arrange the commander-in-chief's establishment in a way that seemed suitable for the state in which he proposed to keep house. The beginning of the year 1804 found us at Brest. Our army corps consisted of two divisions of infantry and a brigade of cavalry; the troops were not encamped, but billeted in the neighbouring villages, the generals and their staffs lodging in Brest. In the roads and the harbour were many vessels of every class; with officers of the

army and the navy, Brest presented a lively scene. Admiral Truguet and General Augereau gave many brilliant parties, after the immemorial custom of the French when preparing for war.

During February Augereau was summoned to Paris by the First Consul to confer upon the plan of invading Ireland; I travelled with him. On reaching Paris we found the political horizon very stormy. The Bourbons, who had hoped that Bonaparte, after seizing the reins of government, would work in their cause and get ready to play the part of Monk, when they saw that he had no idea of restoring the Crown to them, resolved to overthrow him. To this end they planned a conspiracy, the leaders of which were three men, all celebrated, but with very different titles to celebrity—General Pichegru, General Moreau, and Georges Cadoudal. Pichegru had been Bonaparte's mathematical tutor at the college of Brienne, and had left it to take service. When the Revolution broke out he was sergeant of artillery; his talents and his courage soon raised him to the command of an army. It was he who conquered Holland in the middle of winter; but his ambition was his ruin. He allowed himself to be inveigled by the agents of the Prince of Condé, and kept up a correspondence with the prince, who promised him great advancement and the title of Constable if he would use his influence with the troops towards replacing Louis XVIII. on the throne of his fathers. Chance, that great arbiter of men's destinies, would have it that after a fight, in which the French troops under Moreau had beaten the division of the Austrian General Klinglin, the baggage wagon of the latter containing letters addressed by Pichegru to the Prince of Condé was captured and brought to Moreau. He was Pichegru's friend and, in some measure, owed his promotion to him, so that as long as Pichegru was in power he concealed the fact of the capture. But when that general, being a member of the Council of Elders, had been arrested with many of his colleagues for acting on behalf of the Bourbons, Moreau lost no time in sending to the Directory the papers proving his guilt, which led to his transportation to Sinamary, in the deserts of

Guiana. He contrived by dint of courage to escape, reached the United States, and then England, and, having from this time no more reason to keep up appearances, he became avowedly a paid agent of Louis XVIII., and decided to come to France to overthrow the Consular Government. However, as he could not hide from himself the fact that, having been cashiered, proscribed, and more than six years absent from France, his influence with the army could not be equal to that of Moreau, the conqueror of Hohenlinden, the favourite of the troops, and their inspector-general, he consented to hold his peace about his reasons for enmity towards Moreau, and to join with him for the triumph of the cause to which he was devoted.

Moreau, a Breton by birth, was studying law at Rennes when the Revolution of 1789 broke out. The turbulent young students chose him for their leader, and when they formed a battalion of volunteers they put Moreau in command of it. Thus, starting on the career of arms in the post of superior officer, he showed himself brave and capable, and was soon raised to the rank of general, and to the chief command of armies. He won several battles, and executed a justly celebrated retreat before the Archduke Charles. But, good soldier as he was, Moreau lacked political courage; as we have seen, he refused to put himself at the head of the Government while Bonaparte was in Egypt, and although he aided him on the 18th Brumaire, he became jealous of his power when he saw him First Consul. He sought every means of supplanting him—urged thereto, it was said, by the jealousy of his wife and his mother-in-law towards Joséphine. This being Moreau's disposition, it was likely that he would easily be brought to co-operate with Pichegru for the overthrow of the Government.

A Breton named Lajolais, an agent of Louis XVIII., and a friend of Moreau, undertook to conduct the communication between him and Pichegru, and was continually passing between London and Paris. By-and-by, however, it became clear that Moreau, while willing to aid in the overthrow of Bonaparte, was minded to hold the power himself, and by

no means to hand it over to the Bourbons; and it was thought that a personal interview with Pichegru might put him in a better frame of mind. The latter, accordingly, was landed by an English vessel on the French coast, near Tréport, and proceeded to Paris, where he found Georges Cadoudal, M. de la Rivière, the two Polignacs, and other Royalists.

Cadoudal was son of a miller in the Morbihan, the youngest of a large family; but a quaint custom exists in part of western Brittany[1] by which the latest born takes the family property. Cadoudal's father was in easy circumstances, and he had received some education. He was of short stature, broad-shouldered, fierce as a tiger, and his daring courage had made him the chief leader of all the 'Chouans' in Brittany. Since the pacification of La Vendée he had lived in London; but his fanatical zeal for the House of Bourbon allowed him no rest so long as the First Consul was at the head of the French Government. He formed a plan of killing him, not by secret assassination, but by attacking him in open day, on the road to Saint-Cloud, with the help of a force of thirty or forty mounted and armed Chouans, disguised as soldiers of the Consular Guard. There was some chance that this plan might succeed, Bonaparte at that time being, as a rule, escorted only by four troopers.

An interview was arranged between Pichegru and Moreau. It took place at night, near the then unfinished Church of the Madeleine. Moreau agreed to the overthrow, and even to the murder, of the First Consul, but would give no aid towards the restoration of the Bourbons. Bonaparte's secret police soon gave notice that some dark business was on foot in Paris, and he ordered the arrest of several old Chouans. One of these made important revelations compromising Moreau, and the Council resolved to arrest him also.

I remember that this arrest produced a very bad impression. Cadoudal and Pichegru not being as yet arrested,

[1] And is not unknown, under the name of 'borough-English,' in the south of England. See Elton, *Origins of English History*, p. 187.

no one thought that they were in France, and it was said that the conspiracy had been trumped up by Bonaparte as an excuse for arresting Moreau. It was, therefore, to the interest of the Government to prove that they were in Paris, and had been in communication with him. The barriers were closed for some days, and a law of the utmost severity passed against all who sheltered the conspirators. Unable to find a hiding-place, Pichegru, M. de la Rivière, and the Polignacs soon fell into the hands of the police. Their arrest led the public to begin to believe in the conspiracy; and when Cadoudal was captured, all doubts were at an end. He admitted, when examined, that he had come to kill the First Consul, and that the plot was to have the support of a prince of the blood royal. The police were thus led to inquire the whereabouts of all the Bourbon princes. They learned that the Duke of Enghien, a descendant of the Great Condé, had been living for a short time at Ettenheim, a little town in Baden, a few leagues from the Rhine. It has never been proved that the duke was a leader of the conspiracy, though there is no doubt that he had more than once been imprudent enough to enter French territory. Be that as it may, the First Consul caused a detachment of troops, under General Ordener, to cross the Rhine under cover of night, to go to Ettenheim, and seize the Duke of Enghien. He was brought straight to Vincennes, tried, condemned, and shot, before the public had heard of his arrest. This execution was generally blamed. If the prince had been taken on French territory, the law prescribing the capital penalty in such cases might conceivably have been applied; but to carry him off from a foreign country, beyond the frontier, appeared a monstrous violation of international law.

There seems, however, reason to think that the First Consul had not intended to execute the prince, and only wished to terrify the royalist party; but General Savary, chief of the gendarmerie, hastened to Vincennes as soon as judgment was pronounced, took possession of the prince, and, with a superabundance of zeal, had him shot—in order, as he said, to deliver the First Consul from the dilemma of

having either to order his death or spare the life of a dangerous enemy. Savary afterwards repudiated this remark; but I have been assured, by those who were present and heard it, that he certainly made it. Nor is it less certain that Bonaparte blamed Savary for his haste; but, the thing being done, he had to accept the consequences.

General Pichegru, ashamed of having been in league with assassins, and unwilling that the conqueror of Holland should share the sentence of Chouan criminals, hanged himself in prison with his neckcloth. An assertion was made that he had been strangled by some of Bonaparte's mamelukes; but this was a fabrication. Moreover, it would have been a useless crime, it being rather to Bonaparte's interest to display Pichegru in disgrace before a tribunal than to kill him in private. Cadoudal, with several of his associates, was condemned to death and executed. The Polignacs and M. de la Rivière were similarly sentenced, but the penalty was commuted to imprisonment for life. They were at first shut up at Vincennes, then allowed under parole to reside in a private hospital. On the approach of the Allies in 1814 they escaped, and joined the Count of Artois in Franche-Comté, and in the following year were among the bitterest in urging the prosecutions of Bonapartists. As for General Moreau, he was condemned to two years' imprisonment. The First Consul remitted his sentence, on condition of his going to the United States. He lived there in obscurity till 1813, and then returned to Europe, to take his place among the enemies of his country, and to die fighting against Frenchmen,[1] thus confirming all the accusations brought against him at the time of Pichegru's conspiracy.

The French nation, weary of revolutions, and seeing how necessary Bonaparte was if order were to be maintained, forgot the odious business of the Duke of Enghien, and acclaimed Bonaparte Emperor on May 25, 1804. Most Courts recognised the new sovereign. On this occasion,

[1] In the Russian army at Dresden, September 1, 1813. In his last letter to his wife, after he received his mortal wound, he wrote: 'Ce coquin de Bonaparte a toujours été heureux.'

eighteen of the most conspicuous generals were appointed marshals of the Empire: Berthier, Augereau, Masséna, Lannes, Davout, Murat, Moncey, Jourdan, Bernadotte, Ney, Bessières, Mortier, Soult, and Brune in the active army; Kellermann, Lefebvre, Pérignon, and Sérurier in the Senate.

CHAPTER XIX

After Moreau's trial, we returned to Brest; but soon were back in Paris, as on July 14 the marshal had to attend the distribution of the decorations of the Legion of Honour, an order newly founded by the Emperor to reward merit of all kinds. *A propos* of this, I may recall an anecdote which went about at the time. In order that all soldiers who had distinguished themselves in the Republican armies might share in the decoration, the Emperor ordered a report of the exploits of all those who had received arms of honour,[1] and noted a good number of them for the Legion, although many had now entered civil life. M. de Narbonne, a returned *émigré*, was at that time living tranquilly at Paris, in the Rue Miromesnil, next door to my mother. On the day of the distribution of the crosses, M. de Narbonne heard that his man-servant, an old soldier of the army of Egypt, had just been decorated. On sitting down to table he called him, and said, 'It is not proper that a knight of the Legion of Honour should hand plates; still less fitting is it that he should renounce his decoration on account of his service. Sit down by me; we will dine together; and to-morrow you shall have the place of gamekeeper on my country estate, which will not be inconsistent with your decoration.' The Emperor heard of this piece of good taste, and having long desired to know M. de Narbonne, of whose good sense and wit he had heard much, sent for him, and took to him so much that he made him his aide-de-camp. M. de Narbonne's daughter is the Countess of Rambuteau.

After distributing the crosses at Paris, the Emperor

[1] Cf. p. 65.

visited the camp at Boulogne for the same purpose. The army was drawn up in a semi-circle on an open space fronting the sea; it was an imposing ceremony. The Emperor appeared for the first time on a throne, surrounded by his marshals. The enthusiasm was indescribable. The English fleet, perceiving the ceremony, sent some vessels of light draught to disturb it by a cannonade; but our coast-batteries replied actively. At the end of the ceremony, the Emperor, returning to Boulogne, followed by his marshals and a numerous train, halted behind the batteries, and calling General Marmont, who had served in the artillery, said: 'Let us see if we recollect our old trade, and which of us can send a shell on to that English brig which has come so close to tease us.' Then the Emperor, motioning to one side the corporal of artillery in charge of the piece, laid the mortar; they fired, and the shell, grazing the sails of the brig, fell into the sea. General Marmont laid the gun in his turn, also came near the mark, but also did not touch the brig, which, seeing the battery full of generals, fired with double rapidity. 'Come, take your place again,' said Napoleon to the corporal. He in his turn aimed, and dropped the shell right in the middle of the brig. Pierced through and through by the great projectile, the vessel filled in an instant, and sank in a stately way in sight of the whole French army. Enchanted by the fortunate omen, the soldiers broke out into loud cheers, while the English fleet made all sail away. The Emperor congratulated the corporal of artillery, and decorated him on the spot with his own hands.[1]

I too had a share in the favours distributed that day. I

[1] This pleasing anecdote, though not as strictly true as one could wish, has some foundation. On the actual day of the distribution of the crosses no English vessel was sunk by the batteries, and no brig anywhere about that time. The 'Immortalité' frigate was struck by a shot on that day, but not materially injured. On the following day, however, a 13-inch shell fell on board the armed cutter 'Constitution,' with very much the result here described, except that she did not sink until all her crew had been brought off by the boats of the squadron (James). Whether Napoleon was in the battery whence this shell was fired, the naval historian does not say.

had been sub-lieutenant five years and a half, and had made several campaigns. At Augereau's request the Emperor appointed me lieutenant. For a moment, however, I thought he was going to refuse me this promotion; for, remembering that a Marbot had figured as Bernadotte's aide-de-camp in the Rennes conspiracy, he frowned when the marshal mentioned me to him, and said, looking steadily at me: 'Is it you who—— ?' 'No, sir; it is not I who——' answered I, briskly. 'Oh! you're the good one, the Genoa and Marengo one—I make you lieutenant.' The Emperor also granted me a place in the military school at Fontainebleau for my young brother Felix, and from this day forward he never again mixed me up with my elder brother, who was always an object of his dislike, though he had done nothing to deserve it.

The troops of the 7th corps not being yet assembled in camp, there was little for Augereau to do at Brest. He obtained leave, therefore, to pass the rest of the summer and the autumn at his pretty estate of La Houssaye, near Tournau, in Brie. I rather think that the Emperor was better pleased to know that he was there than at the further end of Brittany at the head of a large army; but Napoleon's suspicion as to any lack of devotion on the part of Augereau had no foundation whatever, and arose from the underhand dealings of a certain General S——. This person was a major-general, serving with the 7th corps. He had plenty of talent, and unbounded ambition, but such a bad reputation for honesty that no general officer would rub shoulders with him. Piqued at seeing himself thus cut by his comrades, and wishing to be revenged, he caused a letter to reach the Emperor in which he denounced all the generals of the 7th corps, the marshal among them, as conspirators against the Empire. I must do Napoleon the justice of saying that he did not employ any secret means of ascertaining the truth, contenting himself with passing S——'s letter on to Augereau. The marshal believed himself able to assert that nothing serious was taking place in his army; still, as he knew that several generals and colonels talked sometimes without consideration, he resolved to put a stop to this state of things. Fearing, however, to

compromise the very officers to whom he only wished to give a wigging, he thought it better to send what he had to say by an aide-de-camp, and was good enough to entrust this important errand to me. I left La Houssaye in hot August weather, rode post-haste the 160 leagues which lie between that château and the town of Brest, and back again after only twenty-four hours' stay. I arrived completely tired out, for I think there is no more laborious business than posting on horseback. I had found the state of things a good deal more serious than the marshal thought; there really was a considerable ferment in the army. Before I returned to La Houssaye, however, the message which I bore had tranquillised the minds of the generals, who were nearly all devoted to the marshal.

I was just beginning to recover from the dreadful fatigue I had undergone, when one morning the marshal told me that the generals wanted to kick out S—— for a spy. He added that he absolutely must send an aide-de-camp, and that he had come to ask me if I felt in a condition to repeat my post-haste ride; he would not order me, but would refer the question to me to decide if I could do it. I admit that if there had been any reward, even a promotion to be gained, I should have declined; but it was a question of being of service to my father's friend, the marshal, who had so kindly taken me up; so, without hesitation, I said that I would start in an hour. My only anxiety was whether I should be able to post 320 leagues again on horseback, so tiring is this mode of travelling. However, I got into the way of stopping two hours in every twenty-four, lying down in the straw in the stable of every post-house. It was frightfully hot; still, I got to Brest, and returned without accident, having thus ridden post 640 leagues within one month. I had at least the satisfaction of being able to tell the marshal that the generals would confine themselves to letting S—— know what they thought of him. Having thus fallen into discredit, General S—— deserted to England, married there, although he had a wife already, was condemned to the galleys for bigamy, escaped, and, after twenty years' wandering about Europe, died in penury.

After my second return from Brest the good Marshal Augereau showed a redoubled liking for me, and, in order to prove it by putting me in direct relations with the Emperor, he selected me in September to go to Fontainebleau to fetch Napoleon and escort him to the château of La Houssaye, where he came and passed twenty-four hours, accompanied by several marshals. It was while walking with them there that the Emperor, after imparting to them his views as to the way in which he wished to keep up his dignity and theirs, presented each of them with the sum necessary to buy a house in Paris. Marshal Augereau bought the Hôtel Rochechouart, situated in the Rue de Grenelle Saint-Germain, which is now used as the office of Public Instruction. It is a splendid house; but the marshal preferred to stay at La Houssaye, where he lived in fine style, for, besides his aides-de-camp, each of whom had his apartments, there was always a great number of guests. We enjoyed perfect liberty, and the marshal let us do anything, provided that there was no noise near the wing of the château occupied by his wife.

This excellent lady, always an invalid, lived very much by herself, and seldom appeared in the dining-room or drawing-room; but when she did come, so far from being a constraint on our mirth, she delighted to encourage it. She had with her two very extraordinary lady companions. The first always wore men's clothes, and was known by the name of 'Free-and-Easy.' She was the daughter of one of the leaders who defended Lyons against the Convention in 1793. She escaped with her father; they both disguised themselves as soldiers, and took refuge in the ranks of the 9th regiment of dragoons, passing by military nicknames and going on campaign. Miss 'Free-and-Easy,' who to a general masculine appearance united a most masculine courage, received several wounds, one at Castiglione, where her regiment formed part of Augereau's division. General Bonaparte was often witness to the prowess of this intrepid woman, and when he became First Consul he granted her a pension and gave her a post about his wife. But court life hardly suited her, so she left Madame Bonaparte, who, by

mutual consent, made her over to Madame Augereau to be secretary and reader. The second lady about the maréchale was the widow of the sculptor Adam, and, though eighty years old, was the life and soul of the château. Broad fun and hoaxes were the order of the day at this period, especially at La Houssaye, the master of which was never so happy as when he saw his guests and the young people of his staff alive with merriment.

In November the marshal returned to Paris. The date of the Emperor's coronation was approaching, and the Pope was already at the Tuileries for the ceremony. A crowd of magistrates and deputations from the different departments had been summoned to the capital; there were also all the colonels of the army, with detachments from their regiments, to whom the Emperor distributed on the Champ de Mars those eagles which have since been so celebrated. Paris was splendid with a display of a luxury hitherto unknown. The coronation took place on the 2nd of December. I need not describe the ceremony, for this has been often done. Some days afterwards the marshals gave a ball to the Emperor and Empress. As you know, there were eighteen of them. Marshal Duroc, although he was only Prefect of the Palaces, joined with them, which brought the number of the contributors up to nineteen, each of whom paid 25,000 francs towards the expenses. The ball took place in the great hall of the Opera; nothing so magnificent was ever seen. General Samson, of the engineers, was the manager; the marshals' aides-de-camp were the stewards, charged with doing the honours and distributing tickets. All Paris wanted to be there, and the aides-de-camp were assailed with letters and requests. I never had so many friends. Everything passed with the most perfect order, and the Emperor appeared satisfied.

In the midst of these festivities opened the year 1805, which was to be so prolific of great events. To give his army a share in the general rejoicing, Marshal Augereau repaired to Brest, where, in spite of the rigours of winter, he gave magnificent balls, and entertained in turn the officers,

and even a good many of the soldiers. In the first days of spring he returned to La Houssaye, to await the moment of the invasion of England.

This expedition, though often spoken of as chimerical, was nevertheless on the point of coming off. An English squadron of about fifteen vessels, cruising continually in the Channel, rendered it impossible to transport the French army in boats and pinnaces, which would have sunk at the least touch from large vessels. But the Emperor was able to dispose of sixty sail of the line, French and allied, which were distributed through the ports of Brest, L'Orient, Rochefort, Ferrol, and Cadiz. His notion was to assemble them unexpectedly in the Channel, to crush by an overwhelming force the small squadron which the English had there, and thus to be able to command the passage, were it but for three days.

To this end the Emperor ordered Admiral Villeneuve, commander-in-chief of the naval forces, to send at once every available vessel out of the ports of France and Spain, with orders to sail not for Boulogne, but for Martinique, where it was certain that the English fleet would follow them. While it was hastening off to the Antilles, Villeneuve was to leave those islands before it came up, to sail back round the north of Scotland, and return to the Channel by its upper end. With his sixty vessels he would easily beat the fifteen which the English kept in front of Boulogne, and put Napoleon in command of the passage. The English, on reaching Martinique, not finding Villeneuve's fleet there, would have felt about before starting in pursuit of him, and thus lost precious time. Only part of this fine plan was carried out. Villeneuve started not with sixty, but with something over thirty ships, and reached Martinique. The English, falling into the trap, hastened to the Antilles just as Villeneuve had started back; but the French admiral, instead of returning by Scotland, sailed for Cadiz in order to effect a junction with the Spanish fleet, as if thirty ships were not enough to defeat or drive off the fifteen ships of the English. Nor was that all; Villeneuve lost much time at Cadiz in repairing his ships, during which the enemy's fleet

also got back to Europe, and cruised off Cadiz. Finally, the equinoctial gales rendered egress from the port difficult, and Villeneuve found himself blockaded. Thus collapsed the Emperor's ingenious combination.[1] Realising that the English would not fall into the trap again, he renounced, or postponed indefinitely, his plan of invading Great Britain, and turned his eyes again towards the Continent.

But before relating the chief events in this long war, and the part which I took in it, I must mention a sad disaster which befell our family. My brother Felix, who was in the military school at Fontainebleau, was a little near-sighted, and for this reason had had doubts about entering the army. Once decided, however, he worked so strenuously that he soon became sergeant-major, a difficult post to fill in a school. The mischievous pupils had got a habit, when they had been constructing a redoubt, of burying under the earth of the embankment the tools which were given them for their work. General Bellavène, the head of the school, a severe man, ordered that the tools were to be given to, and accounted for by, the sergeant-majors, who thus became responsible for them. One day when they were at work, my brother, seeing a pupil bury a pickaxe, took notice of it. The other replied very rudely, adding that in a few days they would leave the school, that he would then be the equal of his former sergeant-major, and would call him to account for the reprimand. My brother was offended, and declared that it was not necessary to wait so long. For want of swords, they used compasses fastened to the end of sticks. Jacqueminot, afterwards lieutenant-general, was Felix's second. In spite of my brother's short sight, which put him at a disadvantage, he wounded his adversary, and himself got a thrust through the right arm. His comrades dressed it secretly. Unhappily, non-commissioned officers are bound to carry their weapon in their right hand; and, as bad luck would have it, the Emperor came to Fontainebleau, and made them

[1] 'A scheme bearing the impression of a landsman's mind' is the phrase applied to it by an English historian, and this seems to have been the view taken by its intended victims.

drill for some hours under a roasting sun. My poor brother, always on the run, with his right arm constantly stretched by the weight of a heavy musket, was overcome by the heat, and his wound reopened. He might have pleaded indisposition, and fallen out; but he was in presence of the Emperor, who at the end of the performance was to distribute the much-coveted sub-lieutenants' commissions. Felix made superhuman efforts to conquer the pain, but at length his strength gave way: he fell, and was carried away in a dying state. General Bellavère wrote curtly to my mother, 'If you want to see your son, come quickly, for he has only a few hours to live.' Her despair was so overwhelming that she could not go to Fontainebleau, but I posted thither at once. On arriving, I learnt that my brother was no more. Marshal Augereau was as kind as possible to us in our sorrow, and the Emperor sent Duroc, Marshal of the Palace, with a special message of condolence to my mother. Soon, however, a new grief was to beset her, for I had to leave her. A Continental war had broken out.

The cause of the war was as follows. At the moment when the Emperor most neeeded to be at peace with the Continental Powers, for the execution of his plan of invading England, he issued a decree uniting Genoa to France. This served the turn of the English admirably. They profited by his action to alarm all the Continental nations, representing that Napoleon aspired to a general attack on the whole of Europe. Russia and Austria declared war against us; Prussia, with more circumspection, prepared for war, but as yet did not declare. The Emperor doubtless had foreseen this hostile movement, and the desire to bring matters to a crisis was perhaps his reason for taking possession of Genoa. The hope that Villeneuve might make himself master for a few days of the Channel, by uniting the whole French and Spanish fleets, was at an end. A Continental war was the best means of escaping from the ridicule and appearance of impotence as regarded England, which the failure of the invasion scheme, after three years' open preparation, had brought upon his arms. The new coalition came

just at the right moment to get him out of an annoying position.

Three years in camps had had an excellent result on our troops. Never had France possessed an army so well trained, of such good material, so eager for fighting and fame. Never had a general had under his hand forces so powerful both materially and intellectually, with such capacity for using them. Napoleon, therefore, accepted the war with joy, so certain was he of victory, so confident that he would use his enemies' mistakes to strengthen his throne. He knew how the chivalrous spirit of Frenchmen has in all ages been influenced by the enthusiasm of military glory.



To face Vol. I p. 261.

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CHAPTER XX

THE 'Grand Army,' which the Emperor was about to set in motion against Austria, had at that time its front towards that Power, and towards Europe; the two French corps extended along the coasts of the North Sea, the Channel, and the ocean, facing towards England. Thus the right wing of the first corps, under Bernadotte, was occupying Hanover; the second, under Marmont, was in Holland; the third, under Davout, at Bruges; the fourth, fifth, and sixth, commanded by Soult, Lannes, and Ney respectively, were encamped about Boulogne; while the seventh, Augereau's division, was on the extreme left, at Brest.

To break up this long *cordon*, and mass the troops for the march into Austria, involved a reversal of the front on a vast scale. Every army corps, therefore, had to face about, so as to bring its front towards Germany, and march thither by the nearest road. The right wing became the left, and *vice versâ*. It will be seen that to reach the Danube from Hanover or from Holland, the first and second divisions had a much shorter march to make than those which were at Boulogne; while these again were much nearer than Augereau's corps, which, in order to reach the Swiss frontiers from Brest, had to traverse the whole breadth of France, a distance of three hundred leagues. Travelling in several columns, the army took two months to cover the distance. Augereau, starting the last from Brest, passed them, and halting first at Rennes, then at Alençon, Melun, Troyes, and Langres, he inspected the various regiments, and roused their ardour by his presence. It was magnificent weather. I passed the two months in a post-chaise, going incessantly from one column to another with orders from the marshal.

Twice I was able to stop at Paris and see my mother. Our studs had preceded us; I had three excellent horses, and a servant of moderate quality.

While the Grand Army marched on the Rhine and the Danube, the French troops who were quartered in Upper Italy under the command of Masséna assembled in the province of Milan in order to attack the Austrians on Venetian territory. To transmit orders to Masséna the Emperor was obliged to send his aides-de-camp through Switzerland, which was neutral ground. Now it happened that while Augereau was at Langres an orderly officer bearing despatches from Napoleon was overturned in his carriage and broke his collar-bone. He had himself carried to the marshal's quarters, and declared to him that he could not possibly accomplish his mission. The marshal, knowing how important it was that the Emperor's despatches should reach Italy without loss of time, ordered me to carry them forward by way of Hüningen, whither I had also to take his orders with regard to throwing a bridge across the Rhine. This duty pleased me much, for it would give me a fine journey, with the certainty of rejoining the 7th corps before it could come in contact with the Austrians. I quickly reached Hüningen and Basle, thence came to Berne and Rapperschwyl, where I left my carriage; then on horseback I crossed the Splügen, which was then almost impracticable, and not without danger. I entered Italy by Chiavenna, and joined Masséna near Verona. But it was only there and back, for Masséna was in as great a hurry to see me start back with his reply to the Emperor as I was myself to rejoin Augereau so as not to miss any affairs in which his division might be engaged. I did not, however, return as quickly as I had come, for a heavy snowfall had recently covered not the mountains only, but also the valleys. It was freezing hard, horses fell at every step, and I had to pay 600 frs. for two guides across the Splügen. The passage took us more than twelve hours, walking knee-deep in the snow. The guides even were on the point of refusing to go any further, asserting that there was imminent danger; but I was young and daring, and well aware of the importance of the

despatches which the Emperor was awaiting. I declared, therefore, to my two guides that if they turned back I should go on without them. Every profession has its point of honour —that of guides consists chiefly in never abandoning the traveller entrusted to them ; so mine went forward, and, after really extraordinary efforts, we reached the great inn at the foot of the Splügen just at nightfall. If we had been benighted in the mountain we must inevitably have perished, for the path was barely marked, and was bounded by precipices which the snow would have hindered us from seeing. I was thoroughly done up, but a night's rest restored my energy. I started at daybreak and reached Rapperschwyl, where I found a carriage, and a road to drive on. The most difficult part of the journey was over; in spite of the snow and severe cold I got to Basle and then to Hüningen, where the seventh corps was assembled, on October 19. Next morning we began to pass the Rhine on a bridge of boats constructed for that purpose, for, although a short half-league lower down there was a stone bridge in the city of Basle, the Emperor had ordered Marshal Augereau to respect Swiss neutrality. Nine years later the Swiss themselves violated neutrality when they opened this bridge in 1814 to the enemies of France.

There then I was once again on campaign. It was 1805, a year which saw the opening of a long period of warfare for me, not to end till Waterloo, ten years later. Numerous as were the wars of the Empire, nearly all French military men enjoyed one or more years of rest, either because they were doing garrison duty in France, or because they were in Italy or Germany at a time when we had no war save in Spain ; but, as you will see, this was not my case. Constantly sent from north to south, and from south to north, wherever there was fighting going on, I did not pass one of these ten years without coming under fire, or without shedding my blood on the soil of some part of Europe.

I do not intend to relate in detail the campaign of 1805 ; I will confine myself to recording some of the principal events. The Russians, who were marching to the support of Austria, were still far off when Field-Marshal Mack, having

imprudently entered Bavaria at the head of 80,000 men, was beaten by Napoleon, outmanœuvred, compelled to take refuge in the fortress of Ulm, and with the greater part of his army, of which only two corps escaped, to lay down his arms. Of these divisions, one, under the command of the Archduke Ferdinand, succeeded in reaching Bohemia; the other, under the old Field-Marshal Jellachich, threw itself into the Vorarlberg towards the Lake of Constance, resting with one flank on Swiss neutral territory, and watching the passes of the Black Forest.[1] It was against this latter force that Augereau was to act.

After crossing the Rhine at Hüningen, the 7th corps was in Baden, the sovereign of which, like those of Bavaria and Würtemberg, had just concluded an alliance with Napoleon. We were thus received well by the population of Breisgau. Field-Marshal Jellachich had not ventured to try conclusions with the French in a country where the communications are so easy, but was awaiting us on the other side of Freiburg, at the entrance to the Black Forest, reckoning on making us pay a heavy price in bloodshed as the cost of the passage. His chief hope was to stop us in the Höllenthal, a long and narrow gorge, commanded on all sides by steep rocks easy to defend; but the troops, jealous of the brilliant success won by their comrades at Ulm, and eager to show their valour also, dashed hotly into the Black Forest, and crossed it in three days, in spite of the difficulties of the ground, the resistance of the enemy, and the scarcity of provisions in that dreadful desert. Finally the army emerged into a fertile country, and encamped about the pleasant town of Donaueschingen. Marshal Augereau and his aides-de-camp were quartered in the magnificent château belonging to the ancient princely house of Furstenberg, in the grounds of which is the source of the Danube. The mighty river shows its power from its birth, for it is navigable for small boats at its issue from the ground. The artillery teams and our carriages had experienced great

[1] Here and on the next page the name Vorarlberg seems to be loosely used.

labour in the rocky defiles of the Black Forest, rendered still more difficult by the icy state of the ground. We had, therefore, to give the horses several days' rest, during which the Austrian cavalry came from time to time to feel our outposts, which were two leagues in advance of the town. Nothing came of it, however, but a little sharpshooting, which amused us, practised us in skirmishing, and gave us an opportunity of learning the various uniforms of the enemy. There I saw for the first time the Archduke Charles's Uhlans, the Rosenberg Dragoons, and the Blankenstein Hussars. When our teams were sufficiently rested, the army continued its march, and during several weeks we had continual engagements, which left us in possession of Engen and Stockach.

Although I was often much exposed in these different affairs, I only had one accident; but that might have been pretty serious. The ground, especially in the neighbourhood of Stockach, was covered with snow; the enemy was defending the position furiously. The marshal ordered me to go and reconnoitre in the direction in which he wished to send a column. The ground appeared to me very level, because the wind driving the snow had filled all the ditches, and I galloped off. But suddenly my horse and I went into a deep ravine, up to our necks in the snow; I was trying to extricate myself when two of the enemy's hussars appeared at the edge and fired their carbines at me. Happily the snow in which my horse and I were floundering interfered with the aim of the Austrian troopers, and I was not hurt; but they were about to fire again, when a detachment of chasseurs sent by the marshal to my assistance drew near, and compelled them to make off promptly. With a little help I got out of the gully, but it took some trouble to pull out my horse, which, however, was also unwounded; and my comrades were able to laugh at the strange figure which I made on emerging from my bath of snow.

After having conquered the whole Vorarlberg, we took possession of Bregenz, and rolled back Jellachich's force upon the Lake of Constance and upon Tyrol. The enemy was covered by the fortress and the celebrated defile of Feld-

kirch, behind which he might have resisted us with advantage. We were expecting a murderous fight to carry this strong position, when, to our great astonishment, the Austrians expressed a desire to capitulate, which Marshal Augereau accepted with alacrity.

During the interview which the two marshals held on this occasion, the Austrian officers, who were humiliated by the recent reverses to their arms, gave themselves the malicious pleasure of imparting to us a very unwelcome piece of news, which had hitherto been concealed from us, but which the Russians and Austrians had learnt by way of England. The French and Spanish fleets had been beaten by Lord Nelson on October 20,[1] not far from Cadiz, off Cape Trafalgar. Our ill-starred Admiral Villeneuve, whom no positive order of Napoleon could determine to throw off his inactivity at a time when the sudden appearance of the fleets of France and Spain in the Channel might have secured the passage to England of the armies collected at Boulogne—Villeneuve, I say, on learning that he was about to be superseded by Admiral Rosily, passed in a moment from excessive circumspection to the extreme of audacity. He issued from Cadiz and delivered battle. Had this action turned out in our favour it would have been almost useless, since the French army, instead of being at Boulogne to profit by his success and cross to England, was fighting in the centre of Germany, more than two hundred leagues from the coast. After a most obstinate combat, the fleets of Spain and France were beaten by that of England, whose admiral, the celebrated Nelson, was slain, bearing to his grave the reputation of the first seaman of the age. On our side we lost Rear-Admiral Magon, a most meritorious officer; one of our vessels blew up, seventeen French and Spanish were taken. A terrible storm arose towards the end of the battle, and lasted all that night and the following day. It very nearly made an end of both conquerors and conquered; the English, having their own safety to consider, were obliged to abandon nearly all their prizes, the greater part of which were brought

[1] Really October 21.

into Cadiz by the remainder of their brave and unfortunate crews; others went to pieces on the rocks and were lost.

It was in this battle that my excellent friend General D'Houdetot received a severe wound in the thigh, from which he has limped ever since. At that time little more than a child, he was a naval cadet attached to the staff of my father's friend, Rear-Admiral Magon. After the death of that brave officer,[1] his vessel, the 'Algésiras,' was captured after a sanguinary fight, and the English placed on board a prize crew of sixty men. But the 'Algésiras' having been separated by the storm from the enemy's fleet, the French officers and seamen who had survived the fight declared to the officers of the English crew that they would have in their turn to surrender, or prepare to recommence the struggle in the midst of the horrors of the night and the storm.[2] The English, not being disposed to fight, capitulated on condition of not being retained as prisoners, and the French, though threatened with shipwreck, joyfully replaced their flag on the stump of the mast. After having been twenty times on the point of foundering, owing to the damaged state of the ship, they succeeded at last in reaching Cadiz Bay. Villeneuve's vessel was captured, and that unlucky admiral was taken to England, where he remained three years as prisoner of war. Having been exchanged, he decided to go to Paris, but was arrested at Rennes, and blew his brains out.[3]

[1] 'The brave and highly-respected Rear-Admiral Magon.'—James.

[2] The 'Algésiras' struck to the 'Tonnant' about 2.15, and Lieutenant Charles Bennett, with a lieutenant of marines and about forty-eight men, took possession of her. There were about 600 Frenchmen on board, of whom forty or fifty were wounded. When the 'Algésiras' had separated from the fleet in the storm of the following day, and was drifting ashore, Lieutenant Bennett ordered the hatches to be taken off in order to afford the French crew an opportunity of saving their lives. After confining the English prize crew in the after-cabin, the French crew, with difficulty, brought the ship into Cadiz, and Lieutenant Bennett and his companions were allowed to return to the fleet.—James.

[3] Villeneuve actually returned to France on parole in the following April, and most accounts of his death attribute it, not to a pistol-shot, but to a wound or wounds with a dagger, whether inflicted by his own hand or not remains uncertain. Contemporaries were disposed to put his suicide into the same category with those of Pichegru and some others which were

When Field-Marshal Jellachich decided to capitulate to the 7th corps of the French army, his decision was the more astonishing to us that, although we had beaten him, his retreat was still open into Tyrol, a country whose inhabitants have been for many ages very loyal to the house of Austria. No doubt the approaches to Tyrol were rendered difficult by the great quantity of snow; but the difficulty would have been still greater for us as the enemy, than it would have been for his troops to retire into a friendly province. Yet if the methodical old field-marshal could not make up his mind to carry on a war in winter among the mountains, it was not so with the officers under his command, many of whom blamed his pusillanimity and talked of disregarding his authority. Among the most ardent in opposition to him was General the Prince of Rohan, a French officer in the service of Austria, a man of great courage and ability. Marshal Augereau, fearing lest Jellachich, persuaded by Rohan's advice, should succeed in throwing himself into Tyrol and escaping us, made haste to grant to the commander of the enemy all the conditions that he demanded. The capitulation, therefore, arranged that the Austrian troops should lay down their arms, and deliver up their flags, guns, and horses, but should not be taken into France, and should be allowed to retire to Bohemia after swearing not to serve against France for a year. When announcing this capitulation in a bulletin, the Emperor at first evinced a little dissatisfaction that the Austrian troops had not been required to go as prisoners into France; but when he knew that, on account of the ease with which they could have escaped, Augereau had no means of compelling them to this, he reconsidered his opinion. As a matter of fact, during the night preceding the day on which they were to lay down their arms, a revolt against Jellachich broke out in several of the Austrian brigades. The Prince of Rohan, refusing to agree to the capitulation, went off with his division of infantry,

at all events very convenient to Napoleon. 'The First Consul is unlucky; his enemies always make away with themselves,' said the Paris of the period.

joined by several regiments from the other divisions, threw himself into the mountains, and crossed them, in spite of the severity of the weather. Then by a bold march passing through the middle of the cantonments of the troops of Marshal Ney, who were occupying the Tyrolese towns, he went near to fall upon the rear of the Army of Italy between Verona and Venice, as it was, under Masséna's command, closely pursuing the Archduke Charles, who was retiring on Friuli. The arrival of the Prince of Rohan in the Venetian territory when Masséna was already at some distance from it might have had very grave consequences; but, fortunately, a French army under the command of General Saint-Cyr coming up from Naples beat the prince and compelled him to surrender. At any rate, he only yielded to force, and was entitled to say that if Field-Marshal Jellachich had come with all his troops, the Austrians would very likely have managed to overcome Saint-Cyr and open a way for themselves.

When a force capitulates, it is customary for the conqueror to send to each division a staff officer to take possession of it, as it were, and bring it at the appointed time to the place where it is to lay down its arms. That one of my comrades who was sent to the Prince of Rohan was left by him in the abandoned camp, since the prince, being able to carry out his retreat in rear of the fortress of Feldkirch, and in a direction opposite to the French camp, had no fear of being stopped on his march. The cavalry, however, was in a different position, for it was bivouacked in a little plain in front of Feldkirch, facing our outposts at no great distance. I had been ordered by Augereau to take my place with the Austrian cavalry, in order to bring it to the appointed place of assembling. This brigade, consisting of three strong regiments, was not under any general, but was commanded by the colonel of the Blankenstein Hussars, a brave and very crafty old Hungarian. I regret that I was not able to catch his name, for I have a great regard for him, although he contrived to bamboozle me in a very unpleasant fashion.

When I arrived in his camp the colonel had offered me

hospitality for the night in the hut where he was lodging, and we agreed to start at daybreak in order to reach the place appointed on the shore of the Lake of Constance between the towns of Bregenz and Lindau. As we had at most three leagues to cover, I was much surprised to hear the officers mounting about midnight. I rushed out, and saw that the squadrons were forming and that they were getting ready to start. The colonels of the uhlans and of the Rosenberg Dragoons, who were under the orders of the colonel of hussars, but had not been informed of his plans, came to ask the motive of this premature departure. I did the same. Thereupon the old colonel answered us, with calm hypocrisy, that Field-Marshal Jellachich, fearing that the French might taunt the Austrian soldiers as they passed their camp, which lay on the direct road to the shore by Lindau, and thus produce quarrels between the troops, had, with Marshal Augereau's consent, ordered the Austrian troops to make a long détour to the right, and thus, by turning the French camp and the town of Bregenz, avoid a meeting with our soldiers. He added that, as the way was much longer and the roads difficult, the leaders of the two armies had put forward the hour of departure by several hours. He was surprised that I had not been informed of it, but probably the letter which had been addressed to me on the subject had been by some misunderstanding stopped at the outposts. He even went so far as to order an officer to go and inquire for this despatch along the whole line. The motives alleged by the colonel of the Blankenstein appeared to his two comrades so natural that they made no remark upon it. Nor did I, although I had an instinctive feeling that the whole thing was a little shady; but what could I do, alone in the middle of the enemy's three thousand cavalry? It seemed better to show confidence than to appear to doubt the good faith of the Austrian brigade. As, moreover, I knew nothing about the flight of the Prince of Rohan's division, I admit it never occurred to me that the cavalry commander was trying to withdraw his force from the capitulation. I marched with him, therefore, at the head of the column. The Austrian com-

mander, who knew the country intimately, had made his arrangements so well for keeping away from the French pickets, the position of which, moreover, was shown by their fires, that we did not pass near any of them; but what the old colonel did not expect, or could not avoid, was a meeting with the flying patrols of cavalry, which are usually sent out at night to a certain distance from a camp. All of a sudden we heard, 'Who goes there?' and found ourselves in the presence of a strong column of French, clearly visible in the moonlight. Then the old Hungarian colonel, not in the least put out, remarked to me: 'This is your business, Mr. Aide-de-camp; kindly come with me and explain the matter to the commander of this French regiment.' We went forward, I gave the password, and found I had to do with the 7th Mounted Chasseurs, who, recognising me as one of Marshal Augereau's aides-de-camp, knowing too that the Austrian troops were expected for the surrender of their arms, made no difficulty about allowing the brigade which I was guiding to pass. The French commander, whose troop had drawn swords, was even polite enough to give the order to sheathe them as a sign of the good understanding which ought to prevail between the two columns, which continued their march, peaceably rubbing shoulders with each other. I did question the officer of chasseurs with regard to the change in the hour at which the arms were to be surrendered; but he had heard nothing of it. This, however, aroused no suspicion in my mind, as I knew that an order of this kind was not one of those which are communicated to the regiments beforehand from head-quarters. So I continued to march all the rest of the night with the enemy's column, finding that the détour which we had to make was certainly very long, and that the roads were very bad. Finally, as the day dawned, the old colonel perceiving a bit of level ground said to me in a bantering tone that although he was obliged before long to hand over the horses of his three regiments to the French, he wished at least to deliver them in a good condition and to take care of the poor animals up to the last moment, and with

this view he was going to order a feed of corn to be given them.

The brigade halted, formed, dismounted, and as soon as the horses were picketed, the colonel, who alone had remained mounted, assembled the officers and troopers of the three regiments in a circle round him. There, in an inspired tone which rendered this old warrior really magnificent, he announced to them that the Prince of Rohan's division, preferring honour to safety with disgrace, had refused to agree to the shameful capitulation under which Field-Marshal Jellachich had promised to give up to the French the standards and arms of the Austrian troops, and had thrown itself into Tyrol. He would have brought his cavalry division thither also had he not feared that forage for so large a number of horses would not be obtainable in the mountains. However, the plain was before them, by an artifice on which he congratulated himself they had got six leagues' start of the French troops, and all those who had a true Austrian heart might follow him across Germany into Moravia, where he intended to rejoin the troops of their august Emperor, Francis II.

The Blankenstein Hussars replied to their colonel's allocution by a loud hurrah of approbation, but the Rosenberg Dragoons and the Archduke Charles's Uhlans kept a gloomy silence. As for myself, although I did not as yet know German enough to follow the colonel's harangue accurately, the words which I had caught, as well as the speaker's tone and the place in which he was, had made me guess what was on hand, and I admit that I felt very sheepish at having, although unwittingly, made myself the accomplice of this devil of a Hungarian. Meantime a frightful uproar arose in the immense circle which surrounded me, and I had a good opportunity of judging of the inconvenience which results from the heterogeneous mixture of the different races composing the monarchy, and consequently the army, of Austria. All the hussars are Hungarians; the Blankenstein, therefore, approved the proposal made by their colonel and fellow-countryman. But the dragoons were German, and the uhlans

Polish, and for this reason the Hungarian had not the same influence over these two regiments, who, in this dilemma, listened only to their own officers. These declared that, considering themselves bound by the capitulation which the field-marshal had signed, they did not wish by their departure to put him and those of their comrades who were already in the hands of the French into a worse position; since, if any part of the Austrian troops violated the terms, the rest were liable to be taken as prisoners to France. To this the colonel of hussars replied that when the commander-in-chief of an army has lost his head, and failed in his duty so far as to deliver his troops to the enemy, it is the duty of his subordinates to consult only their own courage and patriotism. Then, waving his sword in one hand, and seizing the regimental colours with the other, he cried, 'Go, dragoons, go, and hand over to the French your disgraced colours, and the arms which our Emperor gave you to defend them. As for us brave hussars, we are going to rejoin our august sovereign. We shall be able to show him a flag without stain, and swords borne by valiant soldiers.' Then, coming up to me, and casting a scornful look at the uhlans and dragoons, he added, 'I am quite sure that if this young Frenchman were in our place, and compelled to choose between your course and mine, he would take the courageous side. The French love glory no less than their country, and in matters of honour know what they are about.' With these words the old Hungarian chief set spurs to his horse, and taking his regiment off at a gallop swept away, and soon was out of sight.

There was a measure of truth in both the arguments which I had just heard; but I was more convinced by that of the hussar colonel, because it seemed to me best to suit the interests of his country. I inwardly approved his conduct, therefore; but I could not very well advise the dragoons and the uhlans to follow his example, without exceeding my functions and neglecting my duty. So I maintained a strict neutrality in the discussion, and when the hussars had departed, I proposed to the other two colonels that they

should follow me, and we took the road to Lindau. On the shore of the lake we found the Marshals Jellachich and Augereau, as well as the French army and the two Austrian regiments of infantry which had not followed the Prince of Rohan. On learning from me that the Blankenstein hussars had declined to recognise the capitulation, and had gone off towards Moravia, both marshals were exceedingly angry. Augereau's wrath arose chiefly from the fear lest the Hussars should raise the country in rear of the French army, for the road which they would take lay through the districts in which the Emperor, in marching on Vienna, had left huge masses of his wounded, parks of artillery, and so on. But the colonel thought it better not to notify his presence by attempting any surprise, being in a hurry to get away from the regions lying within the radius of the French army. Therefore, avoiding our outposts, following always byroads, hiding in the forests by day, and marching with all speed by night, he managed to reach the frontier of Moravia without hindrance, and rejoined the Austrian army, which occupied that country.

The troops which surrendered, after giving into our hands their arms, colours, and horses, departed in gloomy silence, as prisoners for one year on parole, in the direction of Bohemia. I remembered as I saw them go the noble harangue of the old Hungarian colonel, and thought I traced in the faces of many of the uhlans and dragoons signs of regret that they had not followed the old warrior, and grief at comparing the honourable position of the Blankenstein with their own humiliation.

Among the trophies given up to us by Jellachich's army were seventeen colours and two standards. According to custom Augereau sent these at once to the Emperor by the hands of two aides-de-camp, and entrusted the duty of taking them to Major Massy and me. We started in a good carriage, preceded by a post-wagon, in which were the colours under guard of a sergeant. We went to Vienna by Kempten, Munich, Linz, and Saint-Pölten, passing the superb abbey of Mölk on the Danube, one of the richest in the world, a little before reaching the last-named place. Four years

later I performed on this spot the most brilliant feat of my military career, under the eyes of the Emperor, and was commended for it by him, as you will hear when we reach the narrative of the campaign of 1809. But I will not anticipate.

CHAPTER XXI

In September 1805, as you have seen, the seven corps composing the Grand Army were on the march from the shores of the ocean to the banks of the Danube. When on October 1 the Emperor Napoleon crossed the Rhine in person at Strasburg, they were already in possession of Baden and Wurtemberg. At the same time a part of the strong force which Russia was sending to the aid of Austria reached Moravia, and the Cabinet of Vienna would in prudence have waited until this powerful reinforcement had joined the Austrian troops. But, carried away by an unwonted ardour, at the instigation of Field-Marshal Mack, it had despatched him at the head of 80,000 men against Bavaria. Of this country Austria had for centuries coveted the possession, while it had been the constant policy of France to defend it against invasions. Compelled to leave his state, the Elector of Bavaria retired with his family and his army to Würzburg, whence he invoked the aid of Napoleon, who granted an alliance to him, and at the same time to the sovereigns of Baden and Wurtemberg.

After the Austrian army under Mack had occupied Ulm, Napoleon, crossing the Danube at Donauwerth, made himself master of Augsburg and Munich. Thus the French army had got in rear of Mack, and cut the communications between the Austrians and Russians, whose leading columns were known to be already at Vienna and coming on by forced marches. The field-marshal then, recognising too late the mistake of allowing himself to be surrounded by the French troops in a circle of which the fortress of Ulm was the centre, tried to get out of it; but was beaten in the successive battles of Werthingen, Gunzburg, and, above all, of Elchingen, where

Marshal Ney covered himself with glory, and was closed in more and more until he was compelled to shut himself up in Ulm with his army. The divisions of the Archduke Ferdinand and of Jellachich alone contrived to get away, the former towards Bohemia, the latter towards the Lake of Constance. Ulm was invested by the Emperor, and, although it was not then much fortified, might, nevertheless, owing to its position and its numerous garrison, have held out for a long period and given the Russians time to come to its aid. But Field-Marshal Mack, passing from boastfulness the most overweening to the most utter discouragement, laid down his arms to Napoleon, who had thus in three weeks dispersed, captured, or destroyed 80,000 Austrians, and delivered Bavaria. The Elector was brought back, and we shall see him in 1813 requite the benefit by the most odious treason.

No longer impeded by Mack's army the Emperor hastened his march on Vienna, passing along the right bank of the Danube. He took possession of Passau, then of Linz, where he learnt that 50,000 Russians under General Kutusoff, reinforced by 40,000 Austrians, whom General Kienmayer had succeeded in bringing together, had crossed the Danube at Vienna, and were in position at Mölk and St.-Pölten. At the same time he was informed that the army under the celebrated Archduke Charles had been beaten by Masséna in Venetia, and was retiring by Friuli in the direction of Vienna, and that the Archduke John was occupying Tyrol with several divisions. Thus the two archdukes were threatening the right of the French army, while the Russians were in front of it. To guard against a flank attack, the Emperor, having Augereau's division already in the direction of Bregenz, ordered Ney to invade Tyrol, and sent Marmont's division to Leoben to stop the Archduke Charles on his way from Italy.

Napoleon having thus secured his right flank wished, before advancing to a front attack on the Russians, whose leading division had just come into contact with his, at Amstetten near Steyer, to guard his left flank against any attack from the Austrian troops who had taken refuge in Bohemia,

under the Archduke Ferdinand. To this end the Emperor bade Marshal Mortier, with Dupont's and Gazan's divisions of infantry, cross the Danube by the bridges at Passau and Linz, and then descend the river by the left bank, while the main body continued its march on the right bank. Meanwhile, in order not to leave Mortier too much isolated, Napoleon formed the scheme of collecting on the Danube a great number of boats captured on the tributary streams, and forming a flotilla which, under the direction of the marine division of the guard, was to descend the river, keeping always abreast of Mortier's corps, thus uniting the forces on the two banks. You may think it very bold of me to venture on a criticism of one of the great captain's operations, but I cannot refrain from saying that there was no sufficient ground for sending Mortier's division to the left bank, and that it was a mistake which might have had the most awkward results. As a matter of fact the Danube, the greatest river of Europe, is below Passau so broad in winter that one cannot with the naked eye make out a man on the opposite bank. Moreover, it is very deep and swift, and therefore guaranteed perfect security to the left wing of the French army. It would have been enough to break the bridges as we reached them in our march towards Vienna, in order completely to protect the left wing of the army as it marched down the right bank, all the more so that an attack could only come from the Archduke Ferdinand, on the side of Bohemia. But the archduke was only too glad to have escaped from the French before Ulm, and with his small number of troops, and those almost entirely cavalry, was not likely to have either the desire or the means of crossing an obstacle like the Danube, in order to attack them at the risk of being hurled back into the river. At the same time, Napoleon, by detaching two of his divisions and isolating them on the further side of this immense river, exposed them to the risk of being captured or cut to pieces, a disaster which was easy to foresee and was very near being realised.

Field-Marshal Kutusoff, who had resolutely awaited the French in the strong position of St.-Pölten, supposing them

to be closely pursued by the army of Mack, on becoming aware of the capitulation of that army did not feel himself strong enough to resist Napoleon single handed. Not caring to risk his troops for the defence of the town of Vienna, he decided to put the Danube between himself and the conqueror, and so crossed the river at Krems, burning the bridge behind him. Hardly had he arrived on the left bank with his whole army than he fell in with the scouts of Gazan's division, which was marching from Dürrenstein on Krems, Marshal Mortier at its head. On learning that an isolated French corps existed on the left bank, Kutusoff resolved to crush it. With this view he attacked it in front, on the narrow high road which runs along the Danube, while his light troops, crowning the scarped heights which command the Danube, were to occupy Dürrenstein, and thus cut off Gazan's retreat. The position of the division at that moment was the more critical that the greater part of the flotilla was staying behind, and there were only two small vessels, which offered no facility for bringing reinforcements from the right bank. Thus attacked in front, in rear, and on one flank, by an enemy six times more numerous, shut in moreover between steep rocks occupied by the Russians, and the deep Danube, the French soldiers, crowded as they were on a narrow causeway, were not for one moment demoralised. Marshal Mortier set them a noble example, for the suggestion having been made that he should take advantage of a boat to cross over to the right bank, where he would be safe in the midst of the Grand Army, and thus avoid giving the Russians the glory of capturing a marshal, he replied that he would die with his soldiers or with them pass over the bodies of the Russians. A sanguinary combat with the bayonet ensued, 5,000 French opposed to 30,000 Russians; the horrors of night were added to those of the struggle. Gazan's division in close column managed to regain Dürrenstein at the moment when Dupont's division, which had remained behind opposite Mölk, alarmed by the sound of the cannon, was hastening to its support. The field of battle remained in the possession of the French. In this hand-to-hand fight, where the bayonet

was almost exclusively used, our soldiers, being the handier and more active, had an immense advantage over the gigantic Russians. The enemy's loss therefore amounted to 4,500, while ours was 3,000 only. Had our divisions not consisted of veteran troops, Mortier's corps would probably have been destroyed. So well did the Emperor understand this, that he made haste to recall it to the right bank; and what proves to me that he recognised the mistake he had made in throwing this isolated body across the river is that, while he freely rewarded the brave regiments which had fought at Dürrenstein, the bulletins made scarcely any mention of this sanguinary affair. It seemed as if, no explanation satisfactory to military men being possible of this operation beyond the Danube, there was a desire to hush up its consequences. What confirms me still more in the opinion which I make bold to offer is, that in the campaign of 1809 the Emperor, when he found himself on the same ground, did not send any force across the river, but on the contrary kept all his army together during all the march to Vienna.

But to return to my own experiences. When Major Massy and I reached Vienna on the mission entrusted to us by Augereau, Napoleon and the bulk of his army had already left that city, of which they had taken possession without striking a blow. Even the passage of the Danube, which it was necessary to cross in order to pursue the Austrians and Russians, who had retired into Moravia, had not been disputed, thanks to a perhaps not wholly creditable trick employed by Marshals Lannes and Murat. This episode, which had so great an influence on the result of this famous campaign, deserves to be related. The city of Vienna stands on the right bank of the Danube. A small branch of the great river flows through the town, from which the main stream is more than half a league distant. At this point the Danube forms a number of islands, connected by a long series of wooden bridges, the last of which crosses the largest arm, and rests on the left bank at a place called Spitz. Over this long series of bridges runs the road to Moravia. When the Austrians defend the passage

across a river, they have the very bad habit of keeping up the bridges till the last moment, in order to retain the power of making counter-attacks. The enemy seldom allows them time to do this, and carries by assault the bridges which they have omitted to burn. The French treated them thus in the campaign of 1796, in the memorable actions of Lodi and Arcola. Even these warnings could not cure the Austrians of the habit. After abandoning Vienna, which was not capable of defence, they retired across the Danube without destroying one of the bridges traversing that mighty stream, and confined themselves to distributing inflammable materials on the flooring of the great bridge, in order to set it on fire when the French appeared. Besides this, they had established on the left bank, at the further end of the bridge of Spitz, a strong battery of artillery and a division of 6,000 men, under the command of Prince Auersperg, a brave soldier, but not a man of much ability. I should mention that a few days before the entry of the French into Vienna, the Emperor had received the Austrian general, Count Gyulai, who came with a flag of truce to make proposals for peace. These had no results; but as soon as the advanced guard had taken possession of Vienna, and Napoleon was established in the royal palace of Schönbrunn, General Gyulai returned and passed more than an hour alone with the Emperor. Thereupon the rumour that an armistice was about to be concluded spread not only among the French regiments as they entered Vienna, but among the Austrian troops who were leaving the town to go across the Danube.

Murat and Lannes, whom the Emperor had ordered to try and make themselves masters of the passage of the river, marched towards the bridge, posted Oudinot's grenadiers in rear of the thick plantations, and then went forward accompanied only by some officers who could speak German. The weak pickets fell back firing on them; the two marshals cried out to the Austrians that there was an armistice, and, continuing to advance, they crossed all the little bridges without hindrance, and having reached the large one, they

made the same statement to the officer in command at Spitz. He did not venture to fire upon two marshals, who came almost alone, asserting that hostilities were suspended; but before letting them pass he wished to go himself to General Auersperg and get his orders. While he was gone, leaving the post in charge of a sergeant, Lannes and Murat persuaded the latter that as a condition of the armistice was that the bridge should be given up to them, he with his soldiers must go and rejoin his officer on the left bank. The poor sergeant hesitated; they pushed him gently back, talking to him all the time, and by a slow but uninterrupted movement reached the further end of the great bridge. There an Austrian officer was about to set a light to the inflammable matter; his match was snatched from his hands, and he was told that if he committed such a crime it would be the worse for him. Meantime the column of Oudinot's grenadiers appeared, and got well on to the bridge; the Austrian gunners were about to fire; the French marshals ran towards the commander of artillery and repeated their assurance that an armistice had been concluded; then, sitting down on the guns, they begged the artillerymen to inform General Auersperg of their presence. In course of time he came up, and was on the point of giving the order to fire, although the French grenadiers were by this time surrounding the Austrian batteries and battalions. But the two marshals assured him there was a treaty, and that its first condition was that the French should occupy the bridges. The unhappy general, fearing to get himself into trouble if he shed blood needlessly, lost his head so far as to withdraw, taking with him all the troops which had been given to him to defend the bridges. Without this blunder on the part of General Auersperg, the passage of the Danube would certainly not have been executed without great difficulty; it might even have turned out impracticable; in which case, Napoleon would have been unable to follow the Russian and Austrian armies into Moravia, and his campaign would have failed. He certainly thought so then, and his opinion was confirmed four years later, when, in 1809, the Austrians

did burn the bridges over the Danube, and to win the passage of the river we were compelled to fight the two battles of Essling and Wagram at a cost of more than 30,000 men; while in 1805 Marshals Lannes and Murat carried the bridges without having a man wounded. But was the stratagem which they employed permissible? I think not. I know that in time of war people stretch their consciences under the pretext that everything which assures victory may be done, in order to diminish the loss of life, and at the same time gain an advantage to one's country. Still, in spite of these weighty considerations, I do not think that one ought to approve the means employed to get possession of the bridge of Spitz. For my part, I should not like to do the same under similar circumstances.

To conclude this episode I may say that General Auersperg was severely punished for his credulity. A court-martial condemned him to be degraded, to be dragged on a hurdle through the streets of Vienna, and finally to be put to death by the hand of the executioner. The same judgment was pronounced against Field-Marshal Mack for his conduct at Ulm. Both, however, obtained a commutation of the capital sentence to that of imprisonment for life. They were released at the end of ten years, but deprived of their military rank, expelled from the nobility, and repudiated by their families. They both died soon after having regained their freedom.

The stratagem of Lannes and Murat having secured the passage of the Danube, the Emperor marched his army in pursuit of the Austrians and Russians. Herewith begins the second phase of the campaign.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE Russian Marshal Kutusoff was marching from Krems by Hollabrunn to Brunn in Moravia, to join the second army, which the Emperor Alexander was leading in person; but on getting near Hollabrunn he learnt with consternation that the divisions of Murat and Lannes were already in possession of that town, and his retreat thereby entirely cut off. To get himself out of this fix, employing a trick in his turn, he sent General Prince Bagration with a flag of truce to Murat, to assure him that an aide-de-camp of his Emperor had just concluded an armistice at Vienna with the Emperor Napoleon, and that peace would without doubt shortly follow. Prince Bagration was a most agreeable man; he knew so well how to flatter Murat that the latter, taken in in his turn by the Russian general, eagerly accepted the armistice in spite of the remarks of Lannes, who wished to fight. But Murat was the superior officer, and Lannes had to obey.

The suspension of hostilities lasted thirty-six hours, and while Murat was inhaling the incense which the cunning Russian lavished on him, Kutusoff's army by a roundabout march, concealed behind a barrier of low hills, escaped the danger, passed Hollabrunn, and took up a strong position by which the road to Moravia was opened to it, and its retreat, as well as its junction with the other Russian army, posted between Znaym and Brunn, was assured. Napoleon was then at the palace of Schönbrunn. He fell into a great rage on learning that Murat had let himself be taken in by Prince Bagration, and had ventured to accept an armistice without orders, and directed him to attack Kutusoff forthwith. But the Russians had changed their position very much for the better, and gave the French a vigorous reception. The fight

was of the most obstinate nature, but at length the town of Hollabrunn, captured and recaptured several times, set on fire by shells, filled with dead and dying, remained in possession of the French. The Russians retired on Brunn; our troops followed and occupied that town without fighting, though it was fortified and commanded by the celebrated citadel of Spielberg.

The Russian armies and part of the remains of the Austrian troops being assembled in Moravia, the Emperor, in order to strike a final blow, proceeded to Brunn. My comrade Massy and I followed him in that direction, but we got along slowly and with much difficulty; first, because the post-horses were on their last legs, and further, by reason of the great quantity of troops, guns, artillery and baggage waggons which cumbered the roads. We were obliged to wait twenty-four hours at Hollabrunn, until the way was cleared through its streets destroyed by the fire, and still full of burning planks, beams, and fragments of furniture. This unlucky town had been so completely burnt that we could not find a single house to take shelter in. During our compulsory stay in the place we were appalled by a horrible spectacle. The wounded, especially the Russians, had during the fight taken refuge in the houses, where they were soon overtaken by the fire. At the approach of this new danger all who were able to move had fled; but many, wounded in the legs or otherwise severely injured, had been burnt alive under the ruins. Some had endeavoured to escape by crawling on the ground, but the fire had pursued them into the streets, and one might see thousands of the poor fellows half reduced to ashes; some of them were even yet breathing. The corpses of men and horses killed in the fight had also been roasted, so that from the unhappy town of Hollabrunn emanated a horrible and sickening odour of roasted flesh, perceptible at some leagues' distance.

There are districts and towns so situated as to be constantly the scene of battles, and Hollabrunn, which offers an excellent military position, is one of them. Thus it hardly repaired the mischief caused by the fire of 1805 when

I saw it four years later, again burnt, and again piled with dead and dying men in a half-roasted state, as I shall have to tell when I relate the campaign of 1809.

Major Massy and I left this focus of disease as soon as we could, and reached Znaym, where four years afterwards I was to be wounded. Finally, we came up with the Emperor at Brunn on November 22, ten days before the battle of Austerlitz.

The day after our arrival we discharged our commission, and handed over the flags with the ceremonial prescribed by the Emperor for occasions of the kind, for he never lost any opportunity of exalting in the eyes of the troops whatever would stimulate their passion for glory. The ceremony was as follows. Half an hour before the parade, which took place at eleven o'clock each day in front of the Emperor's quarters, General Duroc, the grand marshal, sent to our lodging a company of grenadiers of the guard with their band and drums. The seventeen colours and two standards were placed in the hands of as many sergeants. Major Massy and I, preceded by an orderly officer, placed ourselves at the head of the procession, which set out with band playing. The town was full of French troops, and as we passed the soldiers cheered loudly in honour of the victory gained by their comrades of the 7th corps. All the sentries saluted, and as we entered the court of the house where the Emperor lodged, the bands played a march, the troops assembled for parade, presented arms and enthusiastically shouted 'Vive l'Empereur!'

The orderly aide-de-camp came forward to receive us, and presented us to the Emperor, together with the sergeants who carried the Austrian flags. The Emperor inspected the various trophies, and after having dismissed the sergeants, he questioned us freely, both with regard to the battle which Augereau had fought, and upon our observations during the long journey which we had just made through the countries which had been the seat of war. Then he bade us await his orders and follow the imperial head-quarters. Marshal Duroc gave us, as was customary, a receipt for the flags, then informed us that horses would be placed at our disposal, and

invited us during our stay to take our seats at the table where he presided.

The Grand Army was at this time massed around and in front of Brunn; the advanced guard of the Allies occupied Austerlitz, the main body being posted around the town of Olmütz, where the Emperor Alexander and the Emperor of Austria were together. A battle seemed inevitable, but both sides so well understood how vast an influence this result must have on the destinies of Europe that each hesitated to make any decisive movement. Therefore, Napoleon, usually so prompt in his movements, remained eleven days at Brunn before attacking seriously. It is true that every day's delay increased his forces, as soldiers continued to arrive in great numbers who had fallen to the rear on account of illness or fatigue, but as soon as they recovered their strength hastened to rejoin the army, eager to take part in the great battle which they knew was coming. This reminds me that, in this connection, out of good nature, I told a lie which might have ruined my military career. It happened thus. The Emperor used as a rule to treat his officers with kindness, but there was one point on which he was, perhaps, over severe. He held the colonels responsible for maintaining a full complement of men in the ranks of their regiments, and as that is precisely what is most difficult to achieve on a campaign, it was just on this point that the Emperor was most often deceived. The corps commanders were so afraid of displeasing him that they exposed themselves to the risk of being set to fight a number of enemies out of proportion to the strength of their troops, rather than admit that illness, fatigue, and the necessity of procuring food had compelled many of the soldiers to fall to the rear. Thus Napoleon, for all his power, never knew accurately the number of combatants which he had at his disposal on the day of battle.

Now it befell that, while we were staying at Brunn, the Emperor, on one of the rounds which he was incessantly making to visit the positions of the different divisions, noticed the mounted chasseurs of his guard marching to take

up new lines. He was particularly fond of this regiment, the nucleus of which was formed by his *guides* of Italy and Egypt. His trained eye could judge very correctly the strength of a column, and finding this one very short of its number, he took a little note-book from his pocket, and, after consulting it, sent for General Morland, colonel of the mounted chasseurs of the guard, and said to him in a severe tone, 'The strength of your regiment is entered on my notes at 1,200 combatants, and, although you have not yet been engaged with the enemy, you have not more than 800 troopers there. What has become of the rest?' General Morland, at fighting an excellent and very brave officer, but not gifted with the faculty of ready reply, was taken aback, and answered in his Alsatian French that only a very small number of men were missing. The Emperor maintained that there were close upon 400 short, and to clear the matter up he determined to have them counted on the spot; but knowing that Morland was much liked by his staff, and being afraid of what their good nature might do, he thought it would be safer if he took an officer who belonged neither to his household nor to the guard, and, catching sight of me, he ordered me to count the chasseurs, and to come and report their numbers to him in person. Having said this, he galloped off. I began my operation, which was all the more easy that the troopers were marching at a walk, and in fours.

Poor General Morland, who knew how nearly correct Napoleon's calculation had been, was in great distress, for he foresaw that my report would draw down upon him a severe reprimand. He hardly knew me, and did not propose that I should run into any risk in order to spare him unpleasantness. He remained, therefore, in silence by my side, until, fortunately for him, his staff adjutant came up. This officer, Fournier by name, had begun his military career as assistant-surgeon, afterwards becoming surgeon-major, when, feeling that his vocation was more for the sabre than for the lancet, he had requested and obtained permission to take his place among the combatant officers, and Morland, with

whom he had served in former days, had got him a commission in the guard. I had known Captain Fournier very well when he was still surgeon-major; I had, indeed, been under great obligation to him, for not only had he attended my father at the moment when he was wounded, but had followed him to Genoa, where, as long as his life lasted, he came several times a day to look after him. If the doctors whose duty it was to fight the typhus had been as attentive and as zealous as Fournier, my father would, perhaps, not have died. So I had often said to myself, and thus my greeting of Fournier, whom at first I did not recognise in the pelisse of a captain of chasseurs, was of the most friendly kind. General Morland, seeing the pleasure with which we met, conceived the hope of profiting by our mutual friendship to induce me not to tell the Emperor how many of his men had fallen out. He took his adjutant aside and conferred a moment with him. Then the captain came and entreated me in the name of our old friendship to save General Morland from a very awkward position, by concealing from the Emperor the extent to which the effective strength of his regiment had been reduced. I refused positively, and continued my counting. The Emperor's estimate had been very correct, for there were only just over 800 men present, so that 400 were missing.

I was going off to make my report when General Morland and Captain Fournier pressed me anew, calling my attention to the fact that the greater part of the absent men, having fallen out for various causes, would shortly rejoin, and that, as it was probable that the Emperor would not give battle before he had brought up the divisions of Friant and Gudin, who were still thirty-six leagues away at the gates of Vienna, several days would elapse, during which the chasseurs who had remained behind would rejoin the colours. They added that the Emperor was, besides, too busy to verify my report. I did not conceal from myself that I was being asked to deceive the Emperor, which was a serious business; but I also felt that I had a great debt of gratitude to M. Fournier for the really affectionate care which he had bestowed on my dying father. So I allowed myself to be

over-persuaded, and promised to dissemble a great part of the truth.

Hardly was I alone when I perceived the enormity of my fault, but it was too late. The important thing was to get out of it with as little harm as possible. To this end I took care not to reappear before the Emperor while he was on horseback, for my danger was lest he should go off to the chasseurs' bivouac, when their numerical weakness would strike him again and belie my report, which would have brought me into very great trouble. I was wily, therefore, and did not return to the Imperial head-quarters till after nightfall, when Napoleon had dismounted and returned to his apartments. I was taken in, and found him lying at full length on an immense map spread on the floor. As soon as he saw me he called out, 'Well, Marbot, how many mounted chasseurs are there present in my guard? Are there 1,200 of them, as Morland declares?' 'No, sir, I only counted 1,120, that is to say, 80 short.' 'I was quite sure that there were a great many missing.' The tone in which the Emperor pronounced these last words proved that he expected a much larger deficit; and, indeed, if there had been only 80 men missing in a regiment of 1,200, which had just marched 500 leagues in winter, sleeping almost every night in the open air, it would have been very little. So, when the Emperor on his way to dinner crossed the room where the commanders of the guard were assembled, he merely said to Morland, 'You see now you've got 80 chasseurs missing; it is nearly a squadron. With eighty of these fellows one might stop a Russian regiment. You must keep a tight hand to stop the men from falling out.' Then, passing on to the commander of the foot grenadiers, whose effective strength had also been much weakened, Napoleon reprimanded him severely. Morland, deeming himself very fortunate in getting off with a few remarks, came up to me as soon as the Emperor was at table, and thanked me warmly, telling me that some thirty chasseurs had just rejoined, and that a messenger arriving from Vienna had fallen in with more than a hundred between Znaym and Brunn, and a good many more this side of Holla-

brünn, so that he was certain that within forty-eight hours the regiment would have recovered most of its losses. I was quite as anxious for it as he, for I understood the difficulty in which I had been placed by my excess of gratitude towards Fournier. Such was my dread of the just wrath of the Emperor, whose confidence I had so gravely abused, that I could not sleep all night.

My perplexity was still greater the next day, when Napoleon, during his customary visit to the troops, went towards the bivouac of the chasseurs, for a mere question addressed to an officer might have revealed everything. I was, therefore, giving myself up for lost, when I heard the bands in the Russian encampment on the heights of Pratzen, half a league from our outposts; therefore, riding towards the head of the numerous staff accompanying the Emperor, among whom I was, I got as near to him as I could, and said in a loud voice, 'There must surely be some movement going on in the enemy's camp, for there is their band playing marches.' The Emperor heard my remark, abruptly quitted the path leading to the guards' bivouac, and went towards Pratzen to observe what was going on in the enemy's advanced guard. He remained a long time watching, and at the approach of night he returned to Brunn without going to see his chasseurs. Thus I remained several days in mortal anxiety, although I heard of the successive return of sundry detachments. Finally, the battle being at hand, and the Emperor being very busy, the idea of making the verification which I had so much dreaded passed out of his thoughts, but I had had a good lesson. So when I became colonel, and the Emperor questioned me on the number of combatants present in the squadrons of my regiment, I always told the exact truth.

CHAPTER XXIII

If Napoleon was often deceived, he often himself used artifice to secure the success of his plans. A proof of this is the diplomatico-military comedy which I am about to relate, and in which I played my part. This will give you the key of the intrigues which, in the following year, caused the war between Napoleon and the King of Prussia; but to understand it rightly we must go back two months, to the time when the French troops were proceeding by forced marches from the shores of the ocean to the Danube. In order to reach the Upper Danube from Hanover, the shortest way for the first army corps, under Bernadotte, lay through Anspach. This little country belonged to Prussia, but being separated from it by several principalities of the third rank, it had always been, in former wars, considered as neutral territory, through which either side might pass, on paying for what it took and abstaining from all acts of war. This being the recognised state of things, French and Austrian armies had often, in the days of the Directory, traversed the Margraviate of Anspach without giving notice to Prussia, and without her resenting it. Napoleon, profiting by this custom, ordered Bernadotte to go by way of Anspach, which he accordingly did. As soon, however, as the Queen of Prussia and her Court, who detested Napoleon, learnt that the French corps were taking that line of march, they exclaimed that Prussian territory had been violated, and seized the opportunity to rouse the passion of the nation and loudly demand war. The King of Prussia and his minister, Von Haugwitz, alone resisted the general excitement. It was October, 1805, just when hostilities were about to break out between France and Austria, and Russian armies were

coming to the aid of the latter. The Queen of Prussia and the young prince Lewis, nephew of the King, with a view of deciding him to make common cause with Prussia and Austria, invited the Emperor Alexander to come to Berlin, in the hope that his presence would induce Frederick William to make up his mind.

So, on October 25, Alexander arrived in the capital of Prussia. He was received with enthusiasm by the Queen, the Prince, and the party of war with France. The King of Prussia, himself attacked on every side, allowed himself to be persuaded, but with the condition, suggested by the old Prince of Brunswick and Count von Haugwitz, that his army should not take the field until it was seen how the war on the Danube turned out. This partial adhesion did not satisfy either the Emperor Alexander or the Queen of Prussia, but they could not for the moment obtain anything more definite. A melodramatic scene was played at Potsdam when the King of Prussia and the Emperor of Russia, descending by torchlight into the sepulchral vaults of the palace, in presence of the whole Court, swore eternal friendship on the tomb of Frederick the Great, which did not prevent Alexander, eighteen months afterwards, from accepting and incorporating in the Russian Empire a Prussian province, which Napoleon gave him by the treaty of Tilsit, and that in presence of his unfortunate friend, Frederick William. After this ceremony the Emperor of Russia repaired to Moravia, to place himself at the head of his armies; while Napoleon advanced by great strides towards, and soon took possession of, the capital of Austria.

On learning the vacillation of the King of Prussia, and the nature of the treaty of Potsdam, Napoleon, wishing to get the Russians off his hands before the Prussians could make up their minds, marched to meet the former at Brünn, to which place we will now return.

It has long been said, and truly, that ambassadors are chartered spies. The King of Prussia, as news of fresh victories won by Napoleon came in every day, and it was desirable to know what view he might safely take with regard to the superior position of the belligerents, thought proper to send his minister, Von Haugwitz, to the French

head-quarters, that he might judge for himself of the state of affairs. But as some pretext was necessary for this, he commissioned him to bear an answer to the letter which Napoleon had written to him, complaining of the treaty entered into at Potsdam between Prussia and Russia. Herr von Haugwitz arrived at Brünn some days before the battle of Austerlitz, and would have liked very well to be able to stay until the great battle which was impending had been decided, so as to be in a position to advise his sovereign to stay still or to attack us, according as we were the winners or the losers. It needs no military training to see by the map what a Prussian army, starting from Breslau in Silesia, might have done, if it had marched through Bohemia and fallen on our rear towards Ratisbon. The Emperor, knowing that Von Haugwitz sent a messenger to Berlin every day, wished to let the news of the defeat and capture of Jellachich's army get there through him, which, owing to the rapid march of events, was not likely yet to have reached Prussia.

He took the following means to attain this end.

Duroc, the marshal of the household, after giving us notice of what we were expected to do, had all the Austrian colours which Massy and I had brought from Bregenz replaced privately in the quarters which we were occupying. Some hours afterwards, when the Emperor was talking in his study with Herr von Haugwitz, we repeated the ceremony of presentation in precisely the same manner as the first time. The Emperor, on hearing music in the court of his house, feigned astonishment, and went to the window followed by the ambassador. Seeing the trophies borne by the sergeants, he called the aide-de-camp on duty and asked what it all meant. The answer was that there were two aides-de-camp of Marshal Augereau, who were coming to bring the Emperor the colours of Jellachich's Austrian army which had been captured at Bregenz. We were ordered to enter, and there, without winking, and as if he had never seen us, Napoleon received the letter of Augereau, which had been sealed up, and read it, although he had known the contents for four days. Then he questioned us, making us enter into the

minutest details. Duroc had cautioned us to speak loud, because the Prussian ambassador was a little deaf. This was unlucky for my comrade and superior, Massy, since he had lost his voice and could hardly speak; so it was I who had to answer the Emperor, and, seeing his plan, I depicted in the most vivid colours the defeat of the Austrians, their dejection, and the enthusiasm of the French troops. Then, presenting the trophies one after another, I named all the regiments to which they had belonged, laying especial stress upon two, the capture of which was likely to produce the greatest effect upon the Prussian ambassador. 'Here,' said I, 'are the colours of the Emperor of Austria's own regiment of infantry; there is the standard of his brother's, the Archduke Charles, Uhlans.' Napoleon's eyes sparkled, and seemed to say, 'Well done, young man.' Then he dismissed us, and as we went out we heard him say to the ambassador, 'You see, count, my armies are winning at all points; the Austrian army is annihilated, and very soon the Russian army will be so.' Von Haugwitz appeared greatly upset, and as soon as we were out of the room, Duroc said to us, 'This evening the diplomat will write to Berlin to inform his Government of the destruction of Jellachich's army. This will somewhat calm the minds of those who are keen for war with us, and will give the King of Prussia fresh reasons for temporising, which is what the Emperor ardently desires.'

The comedy having been played, the Emperor wished to get rid of an awkward witness who might report the positions of his army, and so hinted to the ambassador that to stay between two armies all ready for an engagement might be a little unsafe for him. He bade him go to Vienna to M. de Talleyrand, his Minister for Foreign Affairs—advice which Herr von Haugwitz followed that same evening. The next day the Emperor said nothing to us about yesterday's performance, but, wishing no doubt to evince his satisfaction at the way in which we had seized his idea, he asked tenderly after Major Massy's cold, and pinched my ear, which was with him a sort of caress.

Meanwhile the great drama was approaching its final scene, and both sides were preparing to fight their stoutest.

Most military authors are apt to confuse the reader's mind by overcrowding their story with details. So much is this the case that, in the greater part of the works published on the wars of the Empire, I have been utterly unable to understand the history of many battles at which I was present, and of which all the phases were well known to me. In order to preserve due clearness in relating a military action, I think one ought to be content with indicating the respective conditions of the two armies before the engagement, and reporting only such facts as affected the decision. That is what I shall try to do in order to give you an idea of the battle of Austerlitz, as it is called, though it took place short of the village of that name. On the eve of the battle, however, the Emperors of Austria and Russia had slept at the château of Austerlitz, and when Napoleon drove them from this, he wished to heighten his triumph by giving that name to the battle.

You will see on the map that the Goldbach brook, which rises on the other side of the Olmütz road, falls into the small lake of Mönitz. This stream, flowing at the bottom of a little valley with pretty steep sides, separated the two armies. The Austro-Russian right rested on a hanging wood in rear of the Posoritz post-house beyond the Olmütz road; their centre occupied Pratzen and the wide plateau of that name; their left was near the pools of Satschan and the swampy ground in their neighbourhood. The Emperor Napoleon rested his left on a hillock difficult of access, to which the Egyptian soldiers gave the name of the 'Santon,' because it had on the top a little chapel with a spire like a minaret. The French centre was near the marsh of Kobelnitz, the right was at Telnitz. But at this point the Emperor had placed very few people, in order to draw the Russians on to the marshy ground, where he had arranged to defeat them by concealing Davout's corps at Gross Raigern, on the Vienna road.

On the 1st of December, the day before the battle, Napoleon left Brünn early in the morning, spent the whole day in inspecting the positions, and in the evening fixed his head-quarters in rear of the French centre, at a point whence the view took in the bivouacs of both sides, as well as the

ground which was to be their field of battle the next day. There was no other building in the place than a poor barn. The Emperor's tables and maps were placed there, and he established himself in person by an immense fire, surrounded by his numerous staff and his guard. Fortunately there was no snow, and, though it was very cold, I lay on the ground and went soundly to sleep. But we were soon obliged to remount and go the rounds with the Emperor. There was no moon, and the darkness of the night was increased by a thick fog which made progress very difficult. The chasseurs of the escort had the idea of lighting torches made of pine branches and straw, which proved very useful. The troops, seeing a group of horsemen thus lighted come towards them, had no difficulty in recognising the imperial staff, and in an instant, as if by enchantment, we could see along the whole line all our bivouac fires lighted up by thousands of torches in the hands of the soldiers. The cheers with which, in their enthusiasm, they saluted Napoleon, were all the more animated for the fact that the morrow was the anniversary of his coronation, and the coincidence seemed of good omen. The enemies must have been a good deal surprised when, from the top of a neighbouring hill, they saw in the middle of the night 60,000 torches lighted, and heard a thousand times repeated the cry of 'Long live the Emperor!' accompanied by the sound of the many bands of the French regiments. In our camp all was joy, light, and movement, while, on the side of the Austrians and Russians, all was gloom and silence.

Next day, December 2nd, the sound of cannon was heard at daybreak. As we have seen, the Emperor had shown but few troops on his right; this was a trap for the enemy, with the view of allowing them to capture Telnitz easily, to cross the Goldbach there, then to go on to Gross Raigern and take possession of the road from Brünn to Vienna, and so to cut off our retreat. The Austrians and Russians fell into the snare perfectly, for, weakening the rest of their line, they clumsily crowded considerable forces into the bottom of Telnitz, and into the swampy valleys bordering on the pools of Satschan and Mönitz. But as they imagined, for some not very

apparent reason, that Napoleon had the intention of retreating without delivering battle, they resolved, by way of completing their success, to attack us on our left towards the 'Santon,' and also on our centre before Puntowitz. By this means our defeat would be complete when we had been forced back on these two points, and found the road to Vienna occupied in our rear by the Russians. As it befell, however, on our left Marshal Lannes not only repulsed all the attacks of the enemy upon the 'Santon,' but drove him back on the other side of the Olmütz road as far as Blasiowitz. There the ground became more level, and allowed Murat's cavalry to execute some brilliant charges, the results of which were of great importance, for the Russians were driven out of hand as far as the village of Austerlitz.

While this splendid success was being won by our left wing, the centre, consisting of the troops under Soult and Bernadotte, which the Emperor had posted at the bottom of the Goldbach ravine, where it was concealed by a thick fog, dashed forwards towards the hill on which stands the village of Pratzen. This was the moment when that brilliant sun of Austerlitz, the recollection of which Napoleon so delighted to recall, burst forth in all its splendour. Marshal Soult carried not only the village of Pratzen, but also the vast tableland of that name, which was the culminating point of the whole country, and consequently the key of the battlefield. There, under the Emperor's eyes, the sharpest of the fighting took place, and the Russians were beaten back. But one battalion, the 4th of the line, of which Prince Joseph, Napoleon's brother, was colonel, allowing itself to be carried too far in pursuit of the enemy, was charged and broken up by the Noble Guard and the Grand Duke Constantine's cuirassiers, losing its eagle. Several lines of Russian cavalry quickly advanced to support this momentary success of the guards, but Napoleon hurled against them the Mamelukes, the mounted chasseurs, and the mounted grenadiers of his guard, under Marshal Bessières and General Rapp. The mêlée was of the most sanguinary kind; the Russian squadrons were crushed and driven back beyond the village of Austerlitz with immense loss. Our troopers captured many

colours and prisoners, among the latter Prince Repnin, commander of the Noble Guard. This regiment, composed of the most brilliant of the young Russian nobility, lost heavily, because the swagger in which they had indulged against the French having come to the ears of our soldiers, these, and above all the mounted grenadiers, attacked them with fury, shouting as they passed their great sabres through their bodies: 'We will give the ladies of St. Petersburg something to cry for!'

The painter Gérard, in his picture of the battle of Austerlitz, has taken for his subject the moment when General Rapp, coming wounded out of the fight, and covered with his enemies' blood and his own, is presenting to the Emperor the flags just captured and his prisoner, Prince Repnin. I was present at this imposing spectacle, which the artist has reproduced with wonderful accuracy. All the heads are portraits, even that of the brave chasseur who, making no complaint, though he had been shot through the body, had the courage to come up to the Emperor, and fell stone dead as he presented the standard which he had just taken. Napoleon, wishing to honour his memory, ordered the painter to find a place for him in his composition. In the picture may be seen also a Mameluke, who is carrying in one hand an enemy's flag and holds in the other the bridle of his dying horse. This man, named Mustapha, was well known in the guard for his courage and ferocity. During the charge he had pursued the Grand Duke Constantine, who only got rid of him by a pistol-shot, which severely wounded the Mameluke's horse. Mustapha, grieved at having only a standard to offer to the Emperor, said in his broken French as he presented it: 'Ah, if me catch Prince Constantine, me cut him head off and bring it to Emperor!' Napoleon, disgusted, replied: 'Will you hold your tongue, you savage?' But to finish the account of the battle. While Marshals Lannes, Soult, and Murat, with the imperial Guard, were beating the right and centre of the allied army, and driving them back beyond the village of Austerlitz, the enemy's left, falling into the trap laid by Napoleon when he made a show of keeping close to the pools, threw itself on the village of Telnitz,

captured it, and, crossing the Goldbach, prepared to occupy the road to Vienna. But the enemy had taken a false prognostic of Napoleon's genius when they supposed him capable of committing such a blunder as to leave undefended a road by which, in the event of disaster, his retreat was secured; for our right was guarded by the divisions under Davout, concealed in the rear in the little town of Gross Reigen. From this point Davout fell upon the allies at the moment when he saw their masses entangled in the defiles between the lakes of Telnitz and Mönitz, and the stream.

The Emperor, whom we left on the plateau of Pratzen, having freed himself from the enemy's right and centre, which were in flight on the other side of Austerlitz, descended from the heights of Pratzen with a force of all arms, including Soult's corps and his guard, and went with all speed towards Telnitz, and took the enemy's columns in rear at the moment when Davout was attacking in front. At once the heavy masses of Austrians and Russians, packed on the narrow roadways which lead beside the Goldbach brook, finding themselves between two fires, fell into an indescribable confusion. All ranks were mixed up together, and each sought to save himself by flight. Some hurled themselves headlong into the marshes which border the pools, but our infantry followed them there. Others hoped to escape by the road that lies between the two pools; our cavalry charged them, and the butchery was frightful. Lastly, the greater part of the enemy, chiefly Russians, sought to pass over the ice. It was very thick, and five or six thousand men, keeping some kind of order, had reached the middle of the Satschan lake, when Napoleon, calling up the artillery of his guard, gave the order to fire on the ice. It broke at countless points, and a mighty cracking was heard. The water, oozing through the fissures, soon covered the floes, and we saw thousands of Russians, with their horses, guns, and wagons, slowly settle down into the depths. It was a horribly majestic spectacle which I shall never forget. In an instant the surface of the lake was covered with everything that could swim. Men and horses struggled in the

water amongst the floes. Some—a very small number—succeeded in saving themselves by the help of poles and ropes, which our soldiers reached to them from the shore, but the greater part were drowned.

The number of combatants at the Emperor's disposal in this battle was 68,000 men; that of the allied army amounted to 82,000 men. Our loss in killed and wounded was about 8,000 men; our enemies admitted that theirs, in killed, wounded, and drowned, reached 14,000. We had made 18,000 prisoners, captured 150 guns, and a great quantity of standards and colours.

After giving the order to pursue the enemy in every direction, the Emperor betook himself to his new head-quarters at the post-house of Posoritz on the Olmütz road. As may be imagined, he was radiant, but frequently expressed regret that the very eagle we had lost should have belonged to the 4th regiment of the line, of which his brother Joseph was colonel, and should have been captured by the regiment of the Grand Duke Constantine, brother of the Emperor of Russia. The coincidence was, in truth, rather quaint, and made the loss more noticeable. But Napoleon soon received great consolation. Prince John of Lichtenstein came from the Emperor of Austria to request an interview, and Napoleon, understanding that this would result in a peace and would deliver him from the fear of seeing the Prussians march on his rear before he was clear of his present enemy, granted it.

Of all the divisions of the French imperial guard, it was the mounted chasseurs who suffered the heaviest loss in their great charge against the Russian guard on the Pratzen plateau. My poor friend, Captain Fournier, had been killed, and General Morland too. The Emperor, always on the look-out for anything that might kindle the spirit of emulation among the troops, decided that General Morland's body should be placed in the memorial building which he proposed to erect on the Esplanade des Invalides at Paris. The surgeons, having neither the time nor the materials necessary to embalm the general's body on the battle-field, put it into a barrel of rum, which was transported to Paris.

But subsequent events having delayed the construction of the monument destined for General Morland, the barrel in which he had been placed was still standing in one of the rooms of the School of Medicine when Napoleon lost the Empire in 1814. Not long afterwards the barrel broke through decay, and people were much surprised to find that the rum had made the general's moustaches grow to such an extraordinary extent that they fell below his waist. The corpse was in perfect preservation, but, in order to get possession of it, the family was obliged to bring an action against some scientific man who had made a curiosity of it. Cultivate the love of glory and go and get killed, to let some oaf of a naturalist set you up in his library between a rhinoceros horn and a stuffed crocodile!

I did not receive any wound at the battle of Austerlitz, though I was often in a very exposed position; notably at the time of the cavalry mêlée on the Pratzen plateau. The Emperor had sent me with orders to General Rapp, whom I succeeded with great difficulty in reaching in the middle of that terrible hurly-burly of slaughterers and slaughtered. My horse came in contact with that of one of the Noble Guard, and our sabres were on the point of crossing, when we were forced apart by the combatants, and I got off with a severe contusion. But the next day I incurred a much greater danger of a very different kind from those with which one ordinarily meets on the field of battle. It happened in this way. On the morning of the 3rd, the Emperor mounted and rode round the different positions where the fights of the day before had taken place. Having reached the shores of the Satschan lake, Napoleon dismounted, and was chatting with several marshals round a camp fire, when he saw floating a hundred yards from the embankment a large isolated ice floe, on which was stretched a poor Russian non-commissioned officer with a decoration. The poor fellow could not help himself, having got a bullet through his thigh, and his blood had stained the ice floe which supported him. It was a horrible sight. Seeing a numerous staff surrounded by guards, the man judged that

Napoleon must be there; he raised himself as well as he could, and cried out that as soldiers of all countries became brothers when the fight was over, he begged his life of the powerful Emperor of the French. Napoleon's interpreter having translated this entreaty, he was touched by it, and ordered General Bertrand, his aide-de-camp, to do what he could to save the poor man. Straightway several men of the escort, and even two staff officers, seeing two great tree-stems on the bank, pushed them into the water, and then, getting astride of them, they thought that by moving their legs simultaneously they would drive these pieces of wood forward. But scarcely were they a fathom from the edge than they rolled over, throwing into the water the men who bestrode them. Their clothes were saturated in a moment, and as it was freezing very hard, the cloth of their sleeves and their trousers became stiff as they swam, and their limbs, shut up as it were in cases, could not move, so that several came near to being drowned, and they only got back to land with great difficulty, by the help of ropes which were thrown to them.

I bethought me then of saying that the swimmers ought to have stripped; in the first place, to preserve their freedom of movement, and secondly, to avoid having to pass the night in wet clothes. General Bertrand having heard this repeated it to the Emperor, who declared that I was right and that the others had shown more zeal than discretion. I do not wish to make myself out better than I am, so I will admit that just having taken part in a battle where I had seen thousands of dead and dying, the edge had been taken off my sensibility, and I did not feel philanthropic enough to run the risk of a bad cold by contesting with the ice floes the life of an enemy. I felt quite content with deploring his sad fate. But the Emperor's answer piqued me, and it seemed to me that I should be open to ridicule if I gave advice and did not dare to carry it into execution. So I leapt from my horse, and stripped myself naked and dashed into the water. I had gone fast in the course of the day and got hot, so that the chill struck me keenly, but I was young and vigorous, and a good swimmer; the Emperor's presence encouraged me, and I struck out

towards the Russian sergeant. At the same time my example, and probably the praise given me by the Emperor, determined a lieutenant of artillery, by name Roumestain, to imitate me.

While he was undressing I was advancing, but with a good deal more difficulty than I had foreseen. The older and stronger ice, which had been smashed to pieces the day before, had almost entirely disappeared, but a new skin had formed some lines in thickness, the sharp edges of which scratched the skin of my arms, breast, and neck in a very unpleasant fashion. The artillery officer, who had caught me up half-way, had not perceived it at all, having profited by the path which I had opened in the new ice. He called my attention to this fact, and generously demanded to be allowed to take his turn of leading, to which I agreed, for I was cruelly cut up. At last we reached the huge floe of old ice on which the poor Russian was lying, and thought that the most laborious part of our enterprise was achieved. There we were quite wrong, for as soon as we began to push the floe forward the layer of new ice which covered the surface of the water, being broken by contact with it, piled itself up in front, so as in a short time to form a mass which not only resisted our efforts, but began to break the edges of the big floe. The bulk of this got smaller every moment, and we began to fear that the poor man whom we were trying to save would be drowned before our eyes. The edges, moreover, of the floe were remarkably sharp, so that we had to choose spots on which to rest our hands and our chests as we pushed. We were at our last gasp. Finally, by way of a crowning stroke, as we got near the bank the ice split in several places, and the portion on which the Russian lay was reduced to a slab only a few feet in breadth, quite insufficient to bear his weight. He was on the point of sinking when my comrade and I, feeling bottom at length, slipped our shoulders under the ice slab and bore it to the shore. They threw us ropes, which we fastened round the Russian, and he was at last hoisted on to the beach. We had to use the same means to get out of the water, for we were wearied, torn, bruised, and bleeding, and could hardly stand. My kind

comrade Massy, who had watched me with the greatest anxiety throughout my swim, had been so thoughtful as to have his horse-cloth warmed before the camp fire, and as soon as I was out of the water he wrapped me in it. After a good rub down I put on my clothes and wanted to stretch out by the fire, but this Dr. Larrey forbad, and ordered me to walk about, to do which I required the help of two chasseurs. The Emperor came and congratulated the artillery lieutenant and me on our courage in undertaking and achieving the rescue of the wounded Russian, and calling his Mameluke Roustan, who always carried refreshments with him on his horse, he poured us out a glass of excellent rum, and asked us, laughing, how we had liked our bath. As for the Russian sergeant, the Emperor directed Dr. Larrey to attend to him, and gave him several pieces of gold. He was fed and put into dry clothes, and after being wrapped in warm rugs he was taken to a house in Telnitz which was used as an ambulance, and transferred the next day to the hospital at Brünn. The poor lad blessed the Emperor as well as M. Roumestain and me, and would kiss our hands. He was a Lithuanian, a native, that is, of a province of the old Poland now joined to Russia. As soon as he was well he declared that he would never serve any other than the Emperor Napoleon, so he returned to France with our wounded and was enrolled in the Polish legion. Ultimately he became a sergeant in the lancers of the guard, and whenever I came across him he testified his gratitude in broken, but expressive, language.

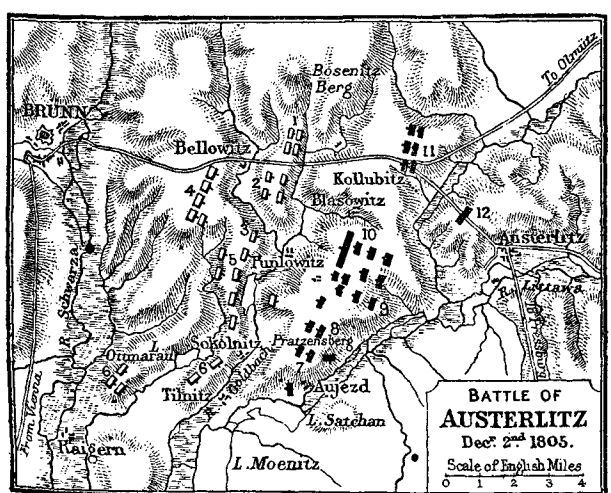
My icy bath, and the really superhuman efforts which I had had to make to save the poor man, might have cost me dear if I had been less young and vigorous. M. Roumestain, who did not possess the latter advantage to the same extent as I, was seized that same evening with violent congestion of the lungs, and had to be taken to the hospital, where he passed several months between life and death. He never, indeed, recovered completely, and had to leave the service invalided some years later. As for myself, though I was very weak, I got myself hoisted on to my horse when the Emperor left the lake to go to the château of Austerlitz, where his head-

quarters now were. Napoleon always went at a gallop, and in my shaken state this pace did not suit me; still, I kept up, because the night was coming on and I was afraid of straying; besides which, if I had gone at a walk the cold would have got hold of me. When I reached the château it took several men to help me to dismount, a shivering fit seized me, my teeth were chattering, and I was quite ill. Colonel Dahlmann, lieutenant-colonel of the mounted chasseurs, who had just been promoted to general in place of Morland, grateful doubtless for the service I had rendered his late chief, took me into one of the outbuildings of the château where he and his officers were established. After having given me some very hot tea, his surgeon rubbed me all over with warm oil; they swaddled me in many rugs and stuck me into a great heap of hay, leaving only my face outside. Gradually a pleasant warmth penetrated my numbed limbs. I slept sound, and, thanks to all this kind care as well as to my twenty-three years, I found myself next morning fresh and in good condition, and was able to mount my horse and witness an extremely interesting spectacle.

The defeat which the Russians had undergone had thrown their army into such disorder that all who escaped the disaster of Austerlitz made haste to reach Galicia and get out of the victor's power. The rout was complete; we took many prisoners and found the roads covered with deserted cannon and baggage. The Emperor of Russia, who had made sure of victory, went away in hopeless grief, authorising his ally Francis II. to make terms with Napoleon. On the very evening of the battle, the Emperor of Austria, to save his country from utter ruin, begged an interview of the French Emperor, and Napoleon agreeing, had halted at the village of Nasiedlowitz. The interview took place on the 4th, near the mill of Poleny, between the French and Austrian lines. I was present at this memorable meeting. Napoleon, starting very early from the château with his staff, was the first at the place of meeting. He dismounted and was strolling about when, seeing the Emperor of Austria approaching, he went towards him and embraced him cordially. A strange sight for the philosopher to reflect on! An Emperor of Germany

come to humble himself by suing for peace to the son of a small Corsican family, not long ago a sub-lieutenant of artillery, whom his talents, his good fortune, and the courage of the French soldier had raised to the summit of power, and made the arbiter of the destinies of Europe!

Napoleon took no unfair advantage of the Austrian Emperor's position, so far as we could judge from the distance at which respect kept us. He was kind and courteous in the extreme. An armistice was concluded, and it was arranged that plenipotentiaries should be sent by both parties to Brünn to negotiate a treaty of peace. The Emperors embraced again at parting, and returned to their respective quarters. During the next two days, Napoleon admitted Major Massy and myself to a farewell audience, charging us to report to Marshal Augereau what we had seen. At the same time the Emperor handed us despatches for the Bavarian Court, which had returned to Munich, and informed us that Augereau had left Bregenz and that we should find him at Ulm. We got back to Vienna and continued our journey, travelling night and day in spite of the snow, which had begun to fall thickly.



CHAPTER XXIV

I SHALL not here enter into details as to the political changes which resulted from the battle of Austerlitz and the Peace of Pressburg. The Emperor proceeded to Vienna and then to Munich, to be present at the marriage of his stepson, Eugène de Beauharnais, with the daughter of the King of Bavaria. It appeared that the despatches with which we were entrusted to that Court referred to the marriage, for we could not have been better received. We stayed, however, but a few hours at Munich, and went on to Ulm, where we found the 7th division and Marshal Augereau. There we stayed a fortnight.

In order to bring the 7th corps gradually nearer to Electoral Hesse, Prussia's close ally, Napoleon gave orders that it should move to Heidelberg. We arrived there toward the end of December, and began the year 1806 there, but after a short stay the division moved on to Darmstadt, the capital of the Landgrave of Hesse-Darmstadt; a prince who both by blood and in policy, was allied to the King of Prussia. Although that monarch had accepted Hanover and concluded an alliance with Napoleon, he had done it with reluctance and dreaded the approach of the French army.

Marshal Augereau, before entering the territory of Darmstadt, thought it his duty to give notice to the Landgrave, and sent me with the letter. I had not more than fifteen leagues to go, which I covered in a night, but on reaching Darmstadt I found that the Landgrave, influenced by hints that the French wished to get possession of his person, had left the residence for another part of his state, whence he could easily take refuge in Prussia. I was annoyed at finding him gone, but learning that the Landgravine was

palace, I begged to be presented to her. This
lo in person a good deal resembled the portraits
press Catherine of Russia, had like her a masculine
, great capacity, and all the qualities needed to
a vast empire. She governed the prince, her husband,
as his state—indeed, she was in all respects what one
ay call a masterful woman. When she saw in my hand
the letter addressed to the Landgrave by Marshal Augereau,
she took it without more ado, as though it had been for
herself. As she told me presently, with the utmost frankness,
it was by her advice that the Landgrave had gone away at the
approach of the French, but she undertook to fetch him back
if the marshal would give his word that he had no orders to
interfere with his liberty. I saw that the arrest and death
of the Duke of Enghien had terrified all the German princes,
who thought that Napoleon might have some complaint
against themselves or their alliances. I testified to the best
of my power to the purity of the French Government's
intentions, and offered to return to Heidelberg and obtain
from Marshal Augereau the assurance which the princess
desired. I was back on the following day with a letter from
the marshal, couched in such friendly terms that the Land-
gravine, saying, 'I rely on the honour of a French marshal,'
went off at once to Giessen, where the Landgrave was, brought
him back to Darmstadt, and both received Augereau with
perfect friendliness when he established his head-quarters in
the town.

The marshal was so thankful for their confidence in him
that when, some months later, the Emperor re-arranged all the
small states, reducing their number to thirty-two, of which
he formed the Confederation of the Rhine, Augereau not
only succeeded in getting the Landgrave of Darmstadt re-
tained, but obtained for him the title of Grand Duke, and
so great an increase of territory that the population was
raised from barely 500,000 to more than 1,000,000 inhabi-
tants. The new Grand Duke some months later sent a
contingent of his troops to join ours against Russia, request-
ing that they should serve in Augereau's division. Thus the

prince owed his safety and his rise in rank to the courage of his wife.

Young as I was at that time, I formed the opinion that in reducing the number of the petty German principalities the old Napoleon made a great mistake. As a matter of fact, in their wars with France the eight hundred princes of the German body could not act together. Some furnished only a company, some a section, several *half a soldier*, so that the union of the various contingents formed an army entirely incapable of concerted action and liable to disband at the first reverse. But when Napoleon had reduced the number of states to thirty-two, there was a beginning of centralisation for the forces of Germany. The sovereigns who had been retained with augmented power formed well-organised little armies. This was the end at which the Emperor aimed, in the hope of thus employing to his own profit all the military resources of the country; and, indeed, so long as we were prosperous, he obtained his end. But with our first check the thirty-two sovereigns came to an understanding, and combined against France. In coalition with Russia they overthrew the Emperor Napoleon, who was thus punished for deserting the ancient policy of the French kings.

We passed part of the winter at Darmstadt in gaieties of all kinds. The grand ducal troops were commanded by a general of much merit, Von Stoch. He had a son of my own age, a lieutenant in the guards—a delightful young man, with whom I became very intimate, and of whom I shall have more to say. We were only ten leagues from Frankfort, still a free town, and very wealthy; from of old the nest of all the intrigues against France, and the source of all the false news circulated in Germany to our injury. Accordingly, on the day after the battle of Austerlitz, when a report had got about that a battle had been fought of which the result was not yet known, the Frankforters were certain that the Russians had won; several newspapers went so far in their hatred as to say that our army had suffered to the extent that not a Frenchman had escaped. The Emperor, who got reports of everything, took no notice, until, foreseeing

the possibility of a breach with Prussia, he began gradually to move his armies near to the frontier of that kingdom. Then, with the view of punishing the Frankforters for their impertinence, he ordered Marshal Augereau to leave Darmstadt at short notice, and quarter himself with his whole army corps on Frankfort and the neighbourhood. The Emperor's order required, further, that on the day of the entry of our troops the town was, in token of welcome, to give one louis-d'or to every private, two to the corporals, three to the sergeants, ten to the sub-lieutenants, and so forth. Moreover, the inhabitants were to lodge the troops and board them at the following rates—six hundred francs a day for the marshal, four hundred for lieutenant-generals, two hundred for major-generals, one hundred for colonels; and every month the state was to send a million francs to the Imperial Treasury at Paris.

The authorities of Frankfort, terrified at so exorbitant a demand, hastened to the French envoy; but he, primed beforehand by Napoleon, replied: 'You asserted that not a single Frenchman had escaped the sword of the Russians; the Emperor Napoleon wished therefore to put you in a position to count the number composing a single corps of the Grand Army; there are six more of the same strength, and the Guard is coming presently.' This answer, when repeated to the inhabitants, filled them with consternation. Vast as their wealth was, they must be ruined if this state of things lasted for long. But Marshal Augereau appealed in their favour to the Emperor's clemency, and received permission to act as he pleased. In this way he took upon himself to retain only his staff and one battalion in the city; the other troops were distributed among the neighbouring states. From that time joy returned, and the inhabitants, to show their gratitude to the marshal, entertained him frequently. I lodged with a rich banker, named Chamot, who, during the eight months I stayed with him, was most kind to me, as were all his household.

While we were at Frankfort a sad mishap which befell an officer of the 7th division was the cause of my being sent on

a twofold errand, the first part of which was unpleasant enough, while the second was agreeable and even splendid. As the result of a brain fever, Lieutenant N——, of the 7th chasseurs, fell into a complete state of childishness. Marshal Augereau assigned to me the duty of taking the poor young man, first, to Paris, to see Murat, who had always taken an interest in him; then, if Murat wished it, to the Quercy. As I had not seen my mother since I set out for the campaign of Austerlitz, and as I knew that she was not far from Saint-Céré, at the château of Bras, which my father had bought some time before his death, I accepted with pleasure a mission which, while enabling me to be of service to Marshal Murat, would allow me to pass some days with my mother. The marshal sent me a good carriage, and I took the road to Paris. But the heat and want of sleep excited my poor companion to such a degree that, passing from idiocy to raving madness, he went near to kill me with a blow from a coach-wrench. Never did I have a more unpleasant journey. At last I reached Paris, and brought Lieutenant N—— to Murat, who resided during the summer at the château of Neuilly. The marshal begged me to complete my task, and to bring N—— to the Quercy. I agreed, in the hope of seeing my mother; but observed that I could not start for twenty-four hours, since Marshal Augereau had entrusted me with despatches for the Emperor, and I was going to Rambouillet to find him. I went thither, in pursuance of my orders, that very day.

I do not know what were the contents of the despatches which I bore, but they made the Emperor very thoughtful. He sent for M. de Talleyrand, and went off with him to Paris, ordering me to follow, and to present myself that evening to Marshal Duroc. I obeyed, and waited for a long time in one of the rooms of the Tuileries, till Duroc, coming out of the Emperor's study and leaving the door ajar, gave directions in a loud voice for an orderly officer to get ready to start by the post on a distant mission. But Napoleon called out: 'Duroc, that is unnecessary, for we have got Marbot here going back to Augereau; he can go on to Berlin; Frankfort is half-way there.' Accordingly, Duroc instructed me to get

ready to go to Berlin with the Emperor's despatches. I was annoyed, because I must give up going to see my mother; but I had to resign myself. I hastened to Neuilly, to let Murat know; and as for my own affairs, thinking that my new mission was very urgent, I returned to the Tuileries, but Duroc allowed me till the next morning. I turned up at dawn, and was put off till the evening; in the evening again till next morning, and so on for eight days. Still, I bore it with patience, because each time that I appeared Duroc only kept me a moment, which allowed me to go about in Paris. He had handed me a pretty large sum of money in order to set myself up in entirely new uniforms, so that I might make a good appearance before the King of Prussia, into whose hands I was myself to give the Emperor's letter. You see that Napoleon overlooked no detail when it was a question of raising the French army in the eyes of foreigners.

I got off at last, after receiving the despatches and instructions from the Emperor bidding me take special note of the Prussian troops, their bearing, their arms, horses, and so on. M. de Talleyrand gave me a packet for M. Laforest, our ambassador at Berlin, with whom I was to stay. On reaching Mainz, which was then in French territory, I learnt that Marshal Augereau was at Wiesbaden. I went there, and surprised him much by telling him that I was going to Berlin by the Emperor's order. Travelling night and day in splendid July weather, I reached Berlin somewhat tired. In those days the roads in Prussia were not metalled, and one rolled along, nearly always at a walk, on shifting sand, into which the wheels sank deep and raised intolerable clouds of dust.

M. Laforest received me most kindly. I put up at the Embassy, and was presented to the King and Queen, and the princes and princesses. The King displayed much emotion on receiving the Emperor's letter. He was a tall and fine man, with a face expressing much kindness, but lacking in the animation which indicates a strong character. The Queen was in truth very handsome, but disfigured by the thick wrapping which she always wore round her neck—it was said, to conceal a decided goitre, which, through medical maltreat-

ment, had become an open sore. Her figure was full of grace, and her countenance, at once bright and dignified, expressed strength of will. I was most graciously received; and as it was a month before the answer which I had to take back to the Emperor was ready—so difficult, it seems, was it to settle—the Queen was kind enough to invite me to all the balls and parties which she gave during my stay.

Of all the members of the royal family, the one who treated me, to all appearances at least, with most kindness, was the King's nephew, Prince Lewis. I had been warned that he detested the French, and especially their Emperor; but as he was deeply interested in military matters, he never ceased questioning me about the siege of Genoa, the battles of Marengo and Austerlitz, and upon the organisation of our army. This prince was a splendid man, and, in respect to mental gifts and character, was the only member of the royal family who bore any resemblance to the great Frederick. I made acquaintance with various persons about the Court, and especially with some officers whom I accompanied every day to parades and manœuvres. Thus I passed my time at Berlin very pleasantly, and our ambassador paid me every attention; but in course of time I perceived that he wished to make me play in a delicate affair a part which would have been improper for me, and I had to adopt an attitude of reserve.

But let us consider a little Prussia's position with regard to Napoleon, with which, as I learnt later on, the despatches which I brought had much to do. By accepting from Napoleon the gift of the Electorate of Hanover, an hereditary possession of the family now reigning in England, the Cabinet of Berlin had alienated not only the anti-French party, but almost the whole Prussian nation. German self-esteem was offended by the successes gained by the French over the Austrians, and Prussia feared, besides, to see her commerce ruined in consequence of the war which the Cabinet of London had just declared upon her. The Queen and Prince Lewis sought to profit by this excitement in bringing the King to join Russia, which, though deserted by

Austria, still had hopes of taking revenge for Austerlitz, and to go to war with France. The Emperor Alexander was still supported in his plans against France by his favourite aide-de-camp, the Polish Prince Czartoryski. Still, the anti-French party, though increasing every day, had not yet succeeded in deciding the King of Prussia to break with Napoleon, but, finding itself supported by Russia, it redoubled its efforts. It was clever enough to profit by Napoleon's mistakes in placing his brother Lewis on the throne of Holland, and nominating himself Protector of the Confederation of the Rhine—an act which was represented to the King of Prussia as a step towards re-establishing Charlemagne's Empire. Napoleon, they said, would end by making all the sovereigns of Germany come down to the rank of his vassals. Exaggerated as these assertions were, they yet produced a great revolution in the King's mind, and from that time his conduct towards France became so equivocal that Napoleon decided to write to him with his own hand, regardless of ordinary diplomatic efforts, to ask, Are you for or against me? Such was the drift of the letter which I had handed to the King. His council, wishing to gain time to arm, delayed the answer, which was what kept me so long at Berlin.

At length, in the month of August, a general explosion against France broke out, and the Queen, Prince Lewis, the nobility, the army, and the whole population cried out loudly for war. The King let himself be carried away, but since, although he had decided to break the peace, he still cherished a faint hope that hostilities might be avoided, it appears that in his answer he undertook to disarm if the Emperor would recall to France all the troops that he had in Germany. This Napoleon would not do until Prussia had disarmed, so that they were revolving in a vicious circle, from which war was the only escape.

Before my departure from Berlin I had evidence of the frenzy to which their hatred of Napoleon carried the Prussian nation, usually so calm. The officers whom I knew ventured no longer to speak to me or salute me; many Frenchmen

were insulted by the populace; the men-at-arms of the Noble Guard pushed their swagger to the point of whetting their sword-blades on the stone steps of the French ambassador's house. In all haste I betook myself back to Paris, taking with me copious information on the state of affairs in Prussia. As I passed through Frankfort I found Marshal Augereau in much grief, having just heard of the death of his wife, a good and excellent person, whom he deeply regretted and whose loss was felt by the whole staff, for she had been most kind to us.

When I got to Paris I gave the Emperor a reply in the King of Prussia's own hand. He read it, and questioned me on what I had seen and heard at Berlin. When I told him how the guardsmen had whetted their sabres on the steps of the French Embassy, he brought his hand to his sword-hilt, and indignantly exclaimed, 'The insolent braggarts shall soon learn that our weapons need no sharpening!'

CHAPTER XXV

My mission being at an end, I returned to Marshal Augereau and passed the whole month of September at Frankfort. We prepared for war by getting all the amusement we could, for we thought that, nothing being more uncertain than soldiers' lives, they had better make haste to enjoy them.

Meanwhile, the different divisions of the Grand Army were concentrating on the banks of the Main. The Emperor had just reached Würzburg, and his guard was crossing the Rhine. The Prussians on their side were marching, and on their way through Saxony had compelled the Elector to join his forces with theirs, this compulsory and therefore insecure alliance being the only one which the King of Prussia possessed in Germany. It was true he was expecting the Russians, but their army was still in Poland, behind the Niemen, more than 150 leagues from the country where the destiny of Prussia was to be decided. It is difficult to conceive the blundering which, during seven years, controlled the decisions of the Cabinets of states hostile to France. We have seen how, in 1805, the Austrians attacked us on the Danube, and allowed themselves to be beaten in detail at Ulm, instead of waiting till the Russians could join them and Prussia declare against Napoleon. Now, in 1806, we had these same Prussians, who a year before might, by joining them, have hindered the defeat of the Austrians and Russians, not only declaring war against us when we were at peace with the Cabinet of Vienna, but imitating its fault by attacking us without awaiting the Russians. Then, three years later, in 1809, the Austrians renewed the war against Napoleon single-handed, just when he was at peace with Prussia and Russia. This want of unanimity secured victory for France. Unhappily it was not so in 1813, when we were crushed by the coalition of our enemies.

The King of Prussia's mistake in 1806, in declaring war against Napoleon before the Russians had come up, was aggravated by the fact that his troops, although well taught, were so badly organised that they were not fit to match themselves with ours. In fact, at this period a company or troop in Prussia was the property of its captain. Men, horses, arms, accoutrements, everything belonged to him. He farmed it at the price of a fixed sum paid to the Government. Thus, all losses being at their expense, it was to the interest of the captains to spare their companies, whether on the march or on the battle-field; and as the number of men which they were bound to have was fixed, they enrolled in the first place all the Prussians who presented themselves, and then all the vagabonds in Europe whom their agent's sergeants could enlist in the neighbouring states. But as this did not suffice, the Prussian recruiting sergeants carried off a great number of men by main force, and these having become soldiers without their own consent were bound to serve till they were past the age for service. Then they were given a beggar's licence, for Prussia was too poor to give them a hospital or retiring pension. During their period of service these soldiers were mingled with genuine Prussians, the number of whom had to be at least half of the strength of each company in order to prevent revolts.

To maintain an army compounded of such heterogeneous elements an iron discipline was needed, wherefore corporal punishment was inflicted for the slightest fault. The numerous non-commissioned officers, all Prussians, carried a cane, which they frequently used. According to the recognised saying, they reckoned one cane to every seven men. Among the foreign soldiers desertion was mercilessly punished with death. You may imagine the terrible position of these foreigners, who, having enlisted in a moment of drunkenness, or been carried off by force, found themselves far from their own country, and in a bitter climate, condemned to be Prussian soldiers—that is to say, slaves during their whole lives. And what lives they were! With scarcely food enough to keep them alive, sleeping on straw, very lightly clothed, no cloaks,

even in the coldest winter, and with pay insufficient to meet their wants. Indeed, they did not wait to beg until they had received licence to do so with their discharge, for when out of sight of their officers they would put out their hands. Both at Potsdam and Berlin it has happened more than once that grenadiers at the King's very gate have begged alms of me. The officers, for the most part, were educated and did their duty well; but half of them were foreigners, poor gentlemen from almost every country in Europe, who, having taken service only to get a living, felt no patriotism or devotion towards Prussia. Naturally, most of them deserted her when she was in trouble. Again, promotion going only by seniority, the great majority of the Prussian officers were old and worn out, and in no state to undergo the hardships of war. It was with an army thus composed and thus officered that the conquerors of Egypt, Italy, and Germany were to be withstood. Madness it was indeed, but the Cabinet of Berlin, misled by the victories which the great Frederick had gained with mercenary troops, thought that it was going to be the same thing again, forgetting that the times had greatly changed.

On October 6 Marshal Augereau and the 7th corps left Frankfort to march towards the frontier of Saxony, of which the Prussians were already in occupation. It was a splendid autumn, a little frost at night and a brilliant sun by day. My little establishment was well organised. I had a good campaigning servant, François Woirland, an old soldier of the Black Legion, a regular swashbuckler and a grand marauder. But these make the best servants on campaign, for with them one never runs short of anything. I had three good horses, good accoutrements, a little money. I was very well in health, so I marched gaily to meet coming events.

Our road lay by Aschaffenburg, whence we went on to Würzburg. There we found the Emperor, who held a march-past of the troops of the 7th corps, amid great enthusiasm. Napoleon, who was in possession of notes about all the regiments, and knew how to use them cleverly so as to flatter the self-esteem of everyone, said, when he saw the 44th of the line, 'Of all the corps in my army you are

the one where there are most stripes, so your three battalions count in my eyes for six.' The soldiers replied with enthusiasm, 'We will prove it before the enemy.' To the 78th light infantry, composed mainly of men from Lower Languedoc and the Pyrenees, the Emperor said, 'There are the best marchers in the army; one never sees a man of them fallen out, especially when the enemy has to be met.' Then he added, laughing, 'But to do you justice in full, I must tell you that you are the greatest rowdies and looters in the army.' 'Quite true, quite true,' answered the soldiers, every one of whom had a duck, fowl, or goose in his knapsack. This was an abuse which had to be tolerated, for Napoleon's armies, once on campaign, only received rations at rare intervals, each living on the country as best he could—a method which doubtless had great inconveniences, but also one immense advantage: it allowed us to push constantly forward without being hampered by provision wagons and stores. This gave us a great superiority over our enemies, whose movements depended on the baking or the arrival of bread, on the pace of herds, and the like.

From Würzburg the 7th corps marched to Coburg, where the marshal was quartered in the prince's palace. All the family had fled at our approach, except the prince himself, a celebrated Austrian field-marshal. The old soldier had fought the French long enough to estimate their character, and had confidence enough in them to await them. His confidence was not misplaced, for the marshal sent him a guard of honour, made a point of returning his visit, and ordered that the greatest respect should be shown him.

We were now at no great distance from the Prussians, the King being at Erfurt. The Queen was with him, and rode about the army on horseback, seeking to kindle the army by her presence. Napoleon, conceiving that this was not a part befitting a princess, published in his bulletins some very insulting remarks about her. The French and Prussian outposts met at length on October 9, at Schleitz, and a slight engagement took place under the Emperor's eyes, where the enemy was beaten—an ill-omened commencement. On the

same day, Prince Lewis, with a force of 10,000 men, was in position at Saalfeld, a town on the banks of the Saale in the middle of a plain, which is reached by crossing very steep hills. As the divisions of Lannes and Augereau had to advance on Saalfeld through these hills, if Prince Lewis wished to await the French, he should have taken up his position in that country, full as it was of narrow gorges where a few troops could stop much greater numbers. He neglected this advantage, however, probably owing to his persuasion that the Prussian troops were worth very much more than the French. He even carried his contempt of all precautions so far as to place part of his forces with a marshy brook in their rear, thus making their retreat in case of reverse very difficult. General Muller, an old Swiss officer in the Prussian service, whom the King had attached to his nephew in order to check his impetuosity, made, indeed, some remarks to this effect, which Prince Lewis took in bad part, adding that there was no need of so many precautions to beat the French—it was enough to fall upon them as soon as they appeared.

They appeared on the morning of the 10th, Lannes' division leading; Augereau's, which followed, did not come up in time to take part in the battle: Nor was its presence required, Lannes' force being more than sufficient. Augereau, while waiting for his division to issue into the open ground, took up his position with his staff on a hillock, from which we had a perfect view of the plain and could follow with the eye all the turning points of the battle.

Prince Lewis might yet have fallen back on the Prussian force which was occupying Jena, but having been the prime instigator of the war it seemed to him unseemly to retire without fighting. He was cruelly punished for his temerity. Marshal Lannes, cleverly taking advantage of the high ground under which Prince Lewis had so imprudently deployed his troops, first played upon them with artillery, and when they were shaken sent forward his masses of infantry, who, rapidly descending from the high ground, poured like a torrent on the Prussian battalions and broke

them up in a moment. Prince Lewis losing his head, and probably seeing the mistake he had made, tried to repair it by putting himself at the head of his cavalry, with which he impetuously charged the 9th and 10th Hussars. At first he gained a slight advantage, but our Hussars, returning to the charge with fury, threw back the Prussian cavalry into the marshes, their infantry at the same time flying in confusion before ours. In the middle of the scuffle Prince Lewis found himself engaged hand-to-hand with a sergeant of the 10th Hussars, named Guindet. Being summoned to surrender, he answered with a sword-stroke which laid open the Frenchman's face, whereupon the other ran the prince through the body, killing him on the spot.

After the battle and the complete rout of the enemy the prince's body was recognised, and Marshal Lannes had it borne with due honour to the Castle of Saalfeld. There it was handed over to the princely family of that name, connected with the royal house of Prussia, with whom Prince Lewis had passed the previous day and evening in making merry over the coming of the French, and even, it was said, in giving a ball—and now he was brought back to them vanquished and slain! I saw his body the next day, laid out on a marble table; he was naked to the waist, still wearing his leather breeches and his boots, and seemed to sleep. He was indeed a handsome man. I could not refrain from sad reflections on the mutability of human affairs as I gazed on the remains of this young man, born on the steps of the throne, but lately so beloved and so powerful. The news of his death caused consternation in the enemy's army, and, indeed, throughout Prussia.

The 7th corps passed October 11 at Saalfeld. In the next two days we reached Kala, where we fell in with some fragments of the Prussian troops who had been beaten before Saalfeld. Marshal Augereau attacked them, but they offered little resistance, and laid down their arms. Among the rest was captured Prince Henry's regiment, in which Augereau had once been a private. As it was difficult in Prussia for any except men of high rank to become field-officers, and as

sergeants were never promoted to sub-lieutenant, his company had still the same captain and the same sergeant-major. The Prussian captain, brought by a whim of fortune back into the presence of his former soldier, now become a marshal and distinguished for many brilliant services, recognised Augereau perfectly, but behaved like a man of sense, and talked to the marshal as if he had never seen him. The marshal invited him to dine, made him sit next to him, and, knowing that his baggage had been captured, lent him all the money that he required, and gave him introductions in France. How curious must that captain's reflections have been! But no words can paint the astonishment of the old sergeant-major at seeing his former subordinate covered with decorations, surrounded by a numerous staff, and in command of an army corps. It seemed to him like a dream. The marshal was much less reserved with this man than he had been with the captain; he addressed him by name, shook hands with him, and gave him twenty-five louis for himself, and two for every one of the soldiers of his time who were still in the company. This struck us as in very good taste.

The marshal reckoned on sleeping at Kala, which is only three leagues from Jena, but just as night was falling the 7th corps received orders to proceed at once to the latter town, which the Emperor had entered without opposition at the head of his guard and of Lannes' troops. The Prussians had abandoned the place in silence, but it had been set on fire, probably by some candles having been forgotten and left in stables, and part of the unhappy city was a prey to the spreading flames when Augereau's corps entered about midnight. It was sad to see the inhabitants, women and old men, half-clothed, carrying away their children and trying to escape destruction by flight, while our soldiers, w[illegible] their duty and the neighbourhood of the enemy did not allow [illegible] the ranks, remained impassible with shouldered arms, like [illegible] who made light of the fire in comparison with the dangers to which they were shortly to be exposed.

As the fire had not reached the quarter of the town by which the French were arriving, the troops could move about

freely, and while they were being massed in the open spaces in the larger streets the marshal and his staff took up their quarters in a handsome-looking house. I was just returning from carrying an order when I heard piercing cries coming from a neighbouring house, one door of which was open. I hurried up, and guided by the cries made my way into a handsome suite of rooms, where I perceived two charming young ladies of eighteen to twenty years old, in night-dresses, struggling with four or five Hessian soldiers belonging to the regiments which the Landgrave had sent to join the troops of the French 7th corps. The men were far gone in liquor, but though they did not understand a word of French, and I very little German, the sight of me and my threats produced an effect on them, and being used to the stick from their officers they took without a word the kicks and blows which, in my indignation, I administered to them freely as I drove them down the stairs. Perhaps I was imprudent, for in the middle of the night, in a town where utter disorder prevailed, being all alone with these men, I ran the risk of being killed by them; but they ran away, and I placed a guard from the marshal's escort in one of the lower rooms. Then I returned to the young ladies' rooms; they had hurriedly put on some clothes, and I received from them warm expressions of gratitude. They were the daughters of one of the University professors, and he, having gone with his wife and servants into the quarter that was on fire, to help one of their sisters who had just been confined, had left them all alone, when the Hessian soldiers appeared. One of the girls said to me with much energy, 'You are marching to battle, and the moment when you have just saved our honour. God will requite you; be sure that no harm will happen to you.' The father and mother, who came back at the same moment, bringing the young mother and her child, were at first greatly surprised to find me there, but as soon as they learnt the reason of my presence they too heaped blessings upon me. I tore myself away from the thanks of this grateful family to report myself to Marshal Augereau, who was resting in the neighbouring house while waiting his orders from the Emperor.

CHAPTER XXVI

THE town of Jena is commanded by a height called the Landgrafenberg, at the foot of which flows the Saale. This is very steep on the side towards Jena, and the only road there existing is that to Weimar through the Mühlthal, a long and difficult passage, the exit from which, covered by a little wood, was guarded by the Saxon troops in alliance with the Prussians. A cannon-shot in rear of them, part of the Prussian army was drawn up in line. The Emperor, being able to reach the enemy only by this passage, was prepared for heavy losses in attacking it, for it did not seem possible to turn the position. But Napoleon's lucky star, which still guided him, furnished him with an unexpected means. So far as I am aware no historian has spoken of it, but I can vouch for the fact.[1]

As we have seen, the King of Prussia had compelled the Elector of Saxony to join forces with him. The Saxon people saw with regret that they were involved in a war which could bring them no advantage in the future, and which in the present was bringing ruin on their country. The Prussians were therefore detested in Saxony, and the Saxon town of Jena shared the feeling. A priest of the town, excited by the sight of the conflagration which was devouring it, and regarding the Prussians as the enemies of his sovereign and his country, thought he might give Napoleon the means of driving them from the land by pointing out to him a little path which infantry could use to climb the steep sides of the Landgrafenberg. He therefore guided a detachment of

[1] Certainly neither Thiers nor Lanfrey seems to have any inkling of the way in which Napoleon learnt how to get his troops on to the Landgrafenberg.

voltigeurs and some staff officers to the place, which the Prussians, thinking the passage impracticable, had omitted to guard. Napoleon, however, took a different view, and on the strength of the report which the officers made went up there himself, accompanied by Marshal Lannes and guided by the Saxon parson. Having observed that between the highest point of the path and the plain which the enemy occupied there existed a little rocky platform, the Emperor resolved to assemble there a portion of his troops, who might issue from it as from a citadel to attack the Prussians. The difficulty of the task was such that no one but Napoleon, commanding Frenchmen, could have surmounted it, but he sent at once for 4,000 pioneering tools from the wagons of the engineers and artillery, and ordered that every battalion should work in turn for an hour at widening and levelling the path, and that as each finished its task it should go and form up silently on the Landgrafenberg, while another took its place. They were lighted at their work by torches, the light of which was concealed from the enemy's eyes by the blaze of Jena. The nights being long at this period of the year, we had time to make the climb accessible not only to the columns of infantry but even to the wagons and the artillery, so that before daylight the corps of Lannes and Soult, and Augereau's first division, together with the foot guards, were massed on the Landgrafenberg. The term *massed* was never more correct, for the breasts of the men of each regiment were almost touching the backs of those in front of them. But the troops were so well disciplined that, in spite of the darkness and the packing of more than 40,000 men on that narrow platform, there was not the least disorder, and although the enemy, who were occupying Cospoda and Closevitz, were only half a cannon-shot off, they perceived nothing.

On the morning of October 14 a thick fog covered the country and favoured our movements. Augereau's second division made a feigned attack, advancing from Jena through the Mühlthal by the Weimar road. Believing this to be the only point by which we could issue from Jena, the enemy had massed a considerable force there. But while he was

preparing to defend the narrow passage with vigour, the Emperor Napoleon caused the troops which he had assembled on the Landgrafenberg during the night to debouch into the plain, and drew them up in order of battle. The first cannon-shots, aided by a light breeze, dispersed the fog, the sun shone out brilliantly, and the Prussians were aghast at seeing the French army deployed in line in their front and advancing to the contest. They could not understand how we had arrived on the plateau while they believed us at the farther end of the Jena valley, with no other means of getting at them but the Weimar road, which they were carefully watching. We engaged without loss of time, and the first line of the Prussians and Saxons, under the Prince of Hohenlohe, was forced to give way. Their reserve was advancing, but we received a strong reinforcement on our side. Ney's corps and Murat's cavalry, which had been delayed in the defile, emerging into the plain came into action. A Prussian army corps commanded by General Ruchel checked our columns for a moment, but it was charged by the French cavalry and almost annihilated, General Ruchel being killed.

Augereau's first division, on descending from the Landgrafenberg into the plain, joined the second arriving by the Mühlthal, and the corps, following the road from Vienna to Weimar, captured Cospoda and then the wood of Iserstädt, while Lannes took Vierzehnheiligen, and Soult Hermstädt. The Prussian infantry fought badly and the cavalry did not do much better. We often saw it coming on with loud shouts, but, intimidated by the calm attitude of our battalions, it never dared to push the charge home. On getting within fifty paces of our line it would wheel about, pursued by a hail of bullets and the hoots of our soldiers. The Saxons fought with courage; they resisted Augereau's corps for a long time, and only after the retreat of the Prussian troops did they form in two great squares and begin to retire firing. Augereau, admiring the courage of the Saxons, and wishing to spare these brave fellows unnecessary bloodshed, sent a flag of truce to invite them to surrender, as they had no longer any hope of support.

But just at that moment Prince Murat, coming up with his cavalry, launched his cuirassiers and dragoons on the Saxon squares; by their resolute charge they broke them and compelled them to lay down their arms. But the next day the Emperor let them go free and sent them back to their sovereign, with whom he lost no time in making peace.

The whole Prussian force retired completely routed along the Weimar road. The fugitives, with their artillery and baggage, were crowded at the gates of the city when the French appeared. Panic-stricken at the sight of them, the whole mob fled in the greatest disorder, leaving a great number of prisoners, flags, guns, and baggage in our hands.

The town of Weimar, which has been called the 'modern Athens,' was at that period inhabited by many distinguished artists and men of science and letters, assembled there from all parts of Germany under the enlightened patronage of the reigning duke. The noise of the cannon, the passage of the fugitives, the entry of the conquerors caused a lively emotion in this peaceable and studious population. Marshals Lannes and Soult preserved perfect order, and beyond having to supply the necessary provisions for the troops, the town underwent no exactions. The Prince of Weimar was serving in the Prussian army, nevertheless his palace, in which the princess had remained, was respected, and none of the marshals took up his quarters there. Marshal Augereau's were established near the gate of the town, in the house of the prince's chief gardener. All the servants of the establishment having fled, the staff found nothing to eat, and was reduced to sup off pineapples and hothouse plums—light food for people who had eaten nothing for twenty-four hours, had passed the previous night on their legs, and the whole day in fighting. But we had won, and that magic word makes privation easy to bear.

The Emperor returned to sleep at Jena, where he received news of a success no less than that which he had himself won. The peculiarity of the battle of Jena was that it was, if one may so say, double, for neither the French nor the Prussian army was wholly before Jena. Both were divided

into two parts and fought two separate battles. While the Emperor, issuing from Jena at the head of the corps under Augereau, Lannes, Soult, and Ney, with his Guard and Murat's cavalry, was beating in the manner described the Prussian force under Prince Hohenlohe and General Ruchel, the King of Prussia, at the head of his main army, commanded by the famous Duke of Brunswick and Marshals Mollendorf and Kalkreuth, had marched from Weimar towards Naumburg, and slept at the village of Auerstädt, not far from the French corps of Bernadotte and Davout, who were in Naumburg and the neighbouring villages. In order to rejoin the Emperor on the side towards Apolda, in the level ground beyond Jena, Bernadotte and Davout had to pass the Saale in front of Naumburg and traverse the narrow hilly defile of Kösen. Although Davout supposed the King of Prussia and the bulk of his army to be in front of the Emperor, and had no idea that they were so close to him as Auerstädt, the careful soldier took possession during the night of the defile of Kösen and the steep hills enclosing it. The King of Prussia and his marshals had omitted to occupy them, imitating the mistake which the Prince of Hohenlohe had committed at Jena in not guarding the Landgrafenberg. The united troops of Bernadotte and Davout amounted only to 44,000 men, while the King of Prussia had 80,000. At daybreak on the 14th the French marshals learnt the superiority of the forces which they had to fight, so on all accounts it was their duty to act in concert. Davout, realising this, declared that he was quite willing to put himself under the orders of Bernadotte; but the latter, making small account of laurels which he had to share with another, and unable to make a sacrifice in the interest of his country, thought fit to act independently. His pretext was that as the Emperor had ordered him to be at Dornburg by the 13th, he must proceed there on the 14th, although Napoleon had written to him in the night that, if by any chance he was still at Naumburg, he was to stay there and support Davout.[1] Bernadotte, thinking this

[1] There is no evidence whatever that any message to this effect was sent, still less that it ever reached Bernadotte. The story was, in all pro-

duty below his reputation, left to Davout the task of defending himself as best he could while he marched along the Saale to Dornburg. Though he did not find a single enemy there, and from the high position which he occupied could see the terrible combat which the intrepid Davout was waging two leagues away, Bernadotte ordered his division to bivouac and quietly prepare their soup. In vain did his generals reproach him with this culpable inaction; he would not stir. Whence it happened that Davout, having with him only the 25,000 men composing the divisions of Friant, Morand, and Gudin, had to oppose them to more than 80,000 Prussians, inspirited by the presence of their king.

Issuing from the Kösen defile the French had drawn up near the village of Hasenhausen, and it was really at this point that the battle took place, for the Emperor was mistaken in thinking that he had in front of him at Jena the King and the bulk of the Prussian army. The fight sustained by Davout's troops was one of the most terrible in our history. His divisions, after having triumphantly resisted all the attacks of the enemy's infantry, formed square, repelled numerous cavalry charges, and, not content with that, advanced with such resolution that the Prussians gave way at all points, leaving the ground strewn with dead and wounded. The Duke of Brunswick[1] and General Schmettau were killed, Marshal Mollendorf severely wounded and taken prisoner. The King of Prussia and his troops executed a retreat on Weimar in pretty good order, expecting to rally in rear of the victorious corps, as they supposed, of Prince Hohenlohe and General Ruchel. These, meanwhile, beaten by Napoleon, were from their side coming to seek a support from the troops under the King. The two huge bodies of beaten and demoralised

bability, invented when it became the cue of Bonapartist writers to blacken that marshal by every possible means; and General Marbot could hardly be expected to test its truth. Of course, he does not profess to vouch for it from his own knowledge.

[1] The Duke of Brunswick was not killed on the spot, though grievously wounded. He lived long enough to be grossly insulted by Napoleon, and died at Altona, on his way to England. His son, 'Brunswick's fated chieftain,' fell at Quatre Bras.

troops having come together on the Erfurt road, the appearance of some French regiments was sufficient to throw them into the greatest confusion. The rout was complete. Thus the bragging of the Prussian officers was punished. The results of this victory were incalculable and made us masters of nearly the whole of Prussia.

The Emperor expressed his great satisfaction with Marshal Davout and the divisions under him in a general order which was read to all the companies and even to the wounded in the ambulances. In the following year Napoleon created Davout Duke of Auerstädt, although the battle was fought less in that village than in Hasenhausen; but the King of Prussia had had his head-quarters at Auerstädt, and the enemy had given that name to the battle which the French call Jena. The army expected to see Bernadotte severely punished, but he got off with a smart reprimand. The Emperor feared as it would seem to vex his brother Joseph, whose sister-in-law, Mademoiselle Clary, Bernadotte had married. We shall see later on how Bernadotte's behaviour on the day of that battle was in some sense his first step to the throne of Sweden.

I was not wounded at Jena, but I was taken in in a way which after forty years it still awakens my wrath to remember. At the moment when Augereau's corps was attacking the Saxons, the marshal sent me to General Durosnel, commanding a brigade of chasseurs, with orders to charge the enemy's cavalry. I was to guide the brigade by a road which I had already reconnoitred. I hastened to place myself at the head of our chasseurs, who were dashing on the Saxon squadrons. These latter resisted bravely, but after a short mêlée were compelled to retire with loss. Towards the end of the fight I found myself face to face with a hussar officer in the white uniform of Prince Albert of Saxony's regiment. I summoned him at the sabre's point to surrender, which he did by handing me his weapon. The combat over, I was generous enough to give it back to him, as is the practice in such cases between officers, and I added that, although by the laws of war his horse belonged to me, I did not wish to

deprive him of it. He thanked me warmly and followed me in the direction which I was taking to return to the marshal, to whom I looked forward to presenting my prisoner. But as soon as we were 500 paces from the French chasseurs, the confounded Saxon officer, who was on my left, drew his sabre, laid open my horse's shoulder, and was on the point of striking me had I not thrown myself upon him, although I had not my sabre in my hand. But as our bodies were in contact he had not room to bring his blade to bear on me, seeing which he caught me by my epaulette—for I was in full uniform that day—and pulled hard enough to make me lose my balance. My saddle turned round, and there I was with one leg in the air and my head downwards, while the Saxon, going off at full gallop, returned to what remained of the enemy's army. I was furious both at the position in which I found myself and at the ingratitude with which the stranger repaid my kind treatment of him. So, as soon as the Saxon army was captured, I went to look for my hussar officer and give him a good lesson, but he had disappeared.

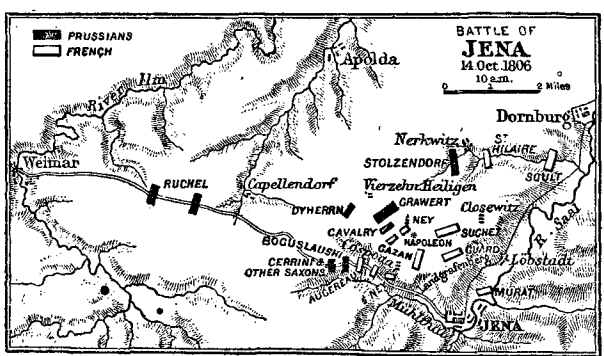
I have said that our new ally, the Grand Duke of Hesse-Darmstadt, had united his troops to those of the Emperor. This brigade, which was attached to the 7th corps, had a uniform exactly like that of the Prussians, so that during the action many Hessians were killed or wounded. My young friend, Lieutenant Stoch, was on the point of meeting the same fate, our hussars having already got hold of him, when he recognised me and called to me, and I made them let him go.

The Emperor richly rewarded the parson of Jena, and the Elector of Saxony, when, as the result of the victories of his new ally Napoleon, he had become king, also rewarded this priest, who lived very peaceably till 1814, at which time he took refuge in France to escape the vengeance of the Prussians. They carried him off and imprisoned him in a fortress for two or three years, then the King of Saxony interceded in his favour with Louis XVIII., and he claimed the priest as having been arrested without authority. The Prussians agreed to release him, and he came to live at Paris.

After the victory of Jena the Emperor gave orders to

pursue the enemy in every direction, and our columns made a vast number of prisoners. The King of Prussia only reached Berlin by way of Magdeburg with great difficulty, and it is even asserted that the Queen was on the point of falling into the hands of our advanced guard.

Augereau's corps crossed the Elbe near Dessau. It would take too long to recount the disasters of the Prussian army; it must be sufficient to say that of the troops which had marched against the French not one battalion escaped: they were all captured before the end of the month. The fortresses of Torgau, Erfurt, and Wittenberg opened their gates to the conquerors, who marched on Berlin. Napoleon halted at Potsdam and visited the tomb of Frederick the Great; then he went on to Berlin, where, contrary to his practice, Davout's corps marched at the head of the procession, an honour which it well deserved, for it had done the most fighting of all; Augereau's corps followed, and then the Guard.



CHAPTER XXVII

My first feeling on returning to Berlin, which I had left not long before a brilliant capital, was one of sympathy with a patriotic population thus brought low by defeat, invasion, and the loss of relations and friends. The entry of the 'noble Guard,' however, disarmed and prisoners, aroused in me very different sentiments. The young officers who had sharpened their sabres on the steps of the French Embassy were now humble enough. They had begged to be taken round, not through, Berlin; not caring to be paraded in view of the inhabitants who had been witnesses of their old swagger. For this very reason the Emperor gave directions to the troops guarding them to march them through the street in which the French Embassy stood. This little bit of revenge was not disapproved by the Berliners, who had no love for the 'noble Guard,' and charged them with having driven the King into war. Marshal Augereau was quartered outside the town at the chateau of Belle Vue, belonging to Prince Ferdinand, the only surviving brother of Frederick the Great, and father of Prince Lewis, killed at Saalfeld. The venerable old man was plunged in grief, aggravated by the fact that, in opposition to all the Court, and especially to his lamented son, he had been strongly against the war, and had foretold the ills which it would bring on Prussia. Marshal Augereau felt bound to call upon Prince Ferdinand, who had removed to a palace in the city. He was most kindly received, and the poor father told him that he had just learnt that his younger and only remaining son, Prince Augustus, was among the prisoners at the gate of the town, and that he would like much to embrace him before his departure for France. As his great age prevented him from going to his

son, the marshal, certain that the Emperor would not disapprove, ordered me to mount at once, find Prince Augustus, and bring him back with me. The meeting of the young prince with his aged parents was a most touching sight. To console the family as much as lay in his power, the kind marshal went in person to the Emperor, and returned with authority to leave the young prince with his family as a prisoner on parole, for which Prince Ferdinand was deeply grateful.

The victory of Jena had immense results. Not only the campaigning troops, but the garrisons of the fortresses were utterly demoralised. Magdeburg surrendered without attempting defence, Spandau did the same, Stettin opened its gates to a division of cavalry, and the governor of Custrin sent boats to our side of the Oder to convey the French troops into the place which it would otherwise have required a several months' siege to capture. Every day we heard of the capitulation of an army corps or the surrender of some fortress. The faulty organisation of the Prussian troops became more obvious than ever. The foreign soldiers, especially those who had been enlisted by force, seized the chance of recovering their freedom, deserting in bodies, or remaining in the rear to surrender to the French.

Besides the territory conquered from the Prussians, Napoleon confiscated the estates of the Elector of Hesse-Cassel, a punishment which his duplicity deserved. This prince, though summoned some time before the war to declare for Prussia or for France, had put both off with promises, waiting to array himself on the side of the conqueror. The avaricious sovereign had amassed a large treasure by selling his own subjects to the English. They were employed to fight the Americans in the War of Independence. Disloyal to his relations, he had offered to ally himself to the French, on condition that the Emperor would give him their states, so nobody regretted him. But his hurried departure was the cause of a remarkable incident which as yet is little known.

When forced to leave Cassel in a hurry to take refuge in England, the Elector of Hesse, who was supposed to be the

richest man in Europe, being unable to bring away the whole of his treasure, sent for a Frankfort Jew named Rothschild, an obscure banker of the third rank, known only for the scrupulous practice of his religion. This seems to have decided the Elector to entrust to him 15,000,000 frs. in specie. The interest of the money was to be the banker's, and he was only to be bound to return the capital.

When the palace of Cassel was occupied by our troops the agents of the French treasury seized property of great value, especially pictures, but no coined money was found, yet it appeared impossible that in his hasty flight the Elector could have carried away the whole of his immense fortune. Now since, by what are conventionally called the laws of war, the capital and the interest of securities found in a hostile country belong of right to the conqueror, it became important to know what had become of the Cassel treasure. Inquiry showed that before his departure the Elector had passed a whole day with the Jew Rothschild. An imperial commission visited him and minutely examined his safes and his cash books; but it was in vain: no trace of the Elector's deposit could be found. Threats and intimidation had no success until the commission, feeling sure that no personal interest could induce a man so religious as Rothschild to perjure himself, proposed to administer an oath to him. He refused to take it. There was talk of arresting him, but the Emperor, thinking this a useless act of violence, forbade it. Then they had recourse to a not very honourable method. Unable to overcome the banker's resistance, they tried to gain him over by the bait of profit. They proposed to leave him half the treasure if he would give up the other half to the French administration. A receipt for the whole, accompanied by a deed of seizure, should be given him to prove that he had only yielded to force and to prevent any claim from lying against him; but the Jew's honesty rejected this suggestion also, and his persecutors, tired out, left him in peace. Thus the 15,000,000 frs. remained in Rothschild's hands from 1806 till the fall of the Empire in 1814. Then the Elector returned to his states, and the banker returned him his deposit as he

had received it. You may imagine the sum which a capital of 15,000,000 frs. would produce in the hands of a Jew banker of Frankfort. From this time dates the opulence of the Rothschilds, who thus owe to their ancestor's honesty the high place which they now hold in the finance of all civilised countries.

But I must resume my narrative. The Emperor reviewed every day the troops who kept passing through Berlin on their way to the Oder in pursuit of the enemy. During his stay in the Prussian capital Napoleon performed that well-known act of magnanimity in granting to the Princess of Hatzfeld the pardon of her husband, who held the office of burgomaster at Berlin, and availed himself of the facilities which that post offered to inform the Prussian generals of the movements of the French army.[1] Such conduct among civilised nations is regarded as that of a spy, and punished with death. The Emperor's generosity on this occasion produced a very good effect on the minds of the Prussian people.

During our stay at Berlin I was agreeably surprised by the arrival of my brother Adolphe, whom I supposed to be at the Isle of France. On learning that hostilities had been renewed on the Continent he asked and obtained leave from General Decaen, commanding the French forces in the East Indies, to return to France, whence he hastened to rejoin the Grand Army. Marshal Lefebvre offered to take my brother on his staff; but Adolphe preferred to be an extra aide-de-camp to Augereau—a mistake, as it turned out, for it injured both of us.

Another meeting, not less unexpected, I had at Berlin. As I was one evening walking with my comrades 'unter den Linden' I saw a group of sergeants of the 1st Hussars approaching. One of them left the group, ran up, and threw his arms round my neck. It was my old mentor, the elder

[1] As a matter of fact, he seems merely to have sent an account to the King of the entry of the French into Berlin. It was on this occasion that Napoleon, 'in order to destroy the only proof of her husband's guilt,' burnt before the eyes of the princess a letter of which he had kept a copy. The prince's life was really spared mainly at the instance of Rapp, Duroc, and others. 'Never before,' says Lanfrey, 'was a reputation for clemency earned by sparing the life of an innocent man.'

Pertelay, who said, crying for delight: 'Is it you, my boy?' The officers with whom I was were at first not a little astonished to see a sergeant on so familiar terms with a lieutenant, but their surprise was at an end when I told them of my former relations with the brave old fellow. He was never tired of embracing me, and saying to his comrades: 'Look at him! I made him what he is!' The good man was really convinced that to his lessons I owed my advancement; and when breakfasting with me the next day, he plied me with the most comical advice, highly sensible as he thought, and the very thing to put a finish on my military education. We shall yet come across this typical hussar of the old school in Spain.

While still at Berlin I heard of the capture at Prenzlow of Prince Hohenlohe's army by Lannes and Murat. Blücher's corps alone remained in the field. Pressed by Soult and Bernadotte, he violated the neutrality of the town of Lubeck by taking shelter there, but was pursued and forced to surrender with 16,000 men.

Here I may mention a curious fact, showing how chance influences the destinies of men and empires. As you have seen, Bernadotte neglected his duty on the day of Jena by holding aloof while Davout was fighting close by against vastly superior forces. This conduct, for which it is hard to find a name bad enough, aided him to rise to the throne of Sweden. After the battle, the Emperor, though furious with him, entrusted to him the task of pursuing the enemy, since his corps, which had not fired a shot, was in better fighting trim than those which had experienced losses. Bernadotte accordingly went on the track of the Prussians, whom he beat first of all at Hall, then, with support from Soult, at Lubeck. Now, as chance would have it, at the moment when the French were attacking Lubeck, the vessels sent by Gustavus IV. with a division of Swedish infantry to the aid of the Prussians were entering the harbour, and the Swedish troops had hardly disembarked when they were compelled to lay down their arms to Bernadotte's force. The marshal, whose manners, when he liked, were, I must

admit, very attractive, was especially desirous to earn in the strangers' eyes the character of a well-bred man. He therefore treated the Swedish officers with much friendliness, and after allowing them honourable terms of capitulation, restored them their horses and baggage, provided for their wants, and, inviting the commander-in-chief, Count Moerner, the generals, and field-officers to his quarters, showed them so much kind consideration that on returning to their own country the Swedes extolled Marshal Bernadotte's magnanimity up and down.

When, some years later, the incapable Gustavus IV. was driven from his throne by a revolution, and succeeded by his uncle, the Duke of Sudermania, who was old and childless, the assembled states chose as Crown Prince the Duke of Holstein-Augustenburg. He, however, did not long enjoy the dignity, being poisoned, as it was supposed, in 1811. The states assembled again to choose an heir to the throne, and after some hesitation between the various German princes who offered themselves for the place, Count Moerner, remembering Bernadotte's generous conduct at Lubeck, proposed his name. He dwelt on his military talents and on his connection, through his wife, with the Bonapartes; and various officers who had been present at Lubeck having seconded the general's recommendation, Bernadotte was almost unanimously elected Crown Prince, and some years later mounted the throne. We shall see in due course how, when on the steps of that throne, to which he had been carried by the glory won at the head of French armies, he showed his ingratitude towards his country.

But we must now return to Prussia. Her main forces had been destroyed by Napoleon, who occupied her capital, as well as a great part of her provinces, while our victorious armies were touching the Vistula, the barrier separating Northern from Central Europe. Marshal Augereau's corps, after remaining a fortnight at Berlin, left that town about mid-November, crossed the Oder at Custrin, and reached the banks of the Vistula at Bromberg. We were in Poland —the poorest and least civilised country in Europe. Beyond

the Oder we found no more high roads; we marched through shifting sands or fearful mud. The land was, for the most part, uncultivated; the few inhabitants whom we met inconceivably filthy. The weather, which had been magnificent during the month of October and the first part of November, became horrible; it rained or snowed incessantly. Provisions became very scarce—no more wine, hardly any beer, and what there was exceedingly bad; muddy water, no bread, and quarters for which we had to fight with the pigs and the cows. The soldiers said: 'Is this what the Poles have the impudence to call their country?' The Emperor himself had his eyes opened, for, having come to reconstitute Poland, he had hoped that the whole population of the country would rise as one man at the approach of the French armies. But no one stirred. In vain, to excite their enthusiasm, did the Emperor write to the famous General Kosciusko, who had headed the last insurrection, to come and join him; Kosciusko remained tranquilly in Switzerland, answering all reproaches addressed to him by saying that he knew too well the careless and fickle character of his compatriots to have any hope that they would succeed in freeing themselves even with the aid of the French. Not being able to attract Kosciusko, the Emperor, wishing at least to make capital out of his renown, addressed a proclamation to the Poles in his name. Not a soul took up arms, although our troops were occupying several provinces of the old Poland and even its capital. The Poles would not rise until Napoleon had declared Poland to be re-established, and he had no notion of doing this until the Poles had risen against their oppressor, which they would not do.

While the 7th corps was at Bromberg, Duroc, Grand Marshal of the Imperial Household, arrived in the middle of the night at Augereau's quarters. The marshal sent for me and bade me get ready to accompany Duroc, who was on his way to Graudenz with a flag of truce to the King of Prussia, and required an officer to take the place of his aide-de-camp, whom he had just sent to Posen with despatches from the Emperor. They selected me because they remembered that

in the previous August I had been on a mission to the Prussian Court, so that I knew most of the officials, as well as the ways of it. I was soon ready; the Marshal of the Household took me in his carriage, and going down the left bank of the Vistula, occupied by our troops, we crossed the river by a ferry opposite Graudenz. We got rooms in the town, and went on immediately to the citadel, where all the Prussian royal family had taken refuge after losing four-fifths of their states. The Vistula lay between the two armies. We found the King calm and resigned. The Queen, whom I had lately seen so beautiful, was much changed, and appeared consumed with grief. She could not conceal from herself that she had urged the King to make war, and was thus the chief cause of the misfortunes of her country, and in no favour with its inhabitants. No more agreeable messenger could have been sent to the King of Prussia than Duroc, who had been ambassador at Berlin, and was well known to both King and Queen, and esteemed for the suavity of his disposition. I was too insignificant to be counted; still the King and Queen recognised me, and addressed some courteous words to me.

I found the Prussian officers about the Court in a mood very far from their swagger of the previous August. Their recent defeat had done much to modify their opinion of the French army. I did not, however, choose to take advantage of this, and carefully avoided speaking of Jena and our other victories. The matters of which Marshal Duroc had to treat with the King of Prussia, in reference to a letter which the King had addressed to Napoleon with a view of obtaining peace, occupied two days. I employed these in reading and walking about on the melancholy drill ground of the fortress. I did not like to go on the ramparts, even for the sake of the admirable view over the Vistula, fearing that I might be suspected of examining the fortifications and armament.

In the engagements which had taken place between Jena and the Vistula, the Prussians had captured from us not more than a hundred prisoners. These were employed on the

earthworks of the fortress of Graudenz; and Marshal Duroc had entrusted me with the distribution of aid to the poor fellows, whose lot was made all the worse by the view which they had of the French troops just across the Vistula. The neighbourhood of his comrades on the other bank, and the contrast of his position with theirs, had moved one of the prisoners, a trooper of the 3rd Dragoons, named Harpin, to employ every means in his power to get out of the hands of the Prussians. It was not an easy job, for he had first to get out of the fortress, then to cross the Vistula. But determination can do a good deal. Being employed by the master carpenter to stack timber, Harpin had secretly constructed a little raft; by the aid of a large cable he had succeeded in letting down first his raft and then himself to the foot of the ramparts. He had launched his raft, and was on the point of embarking, when he was surprised by a patrol, taken back to the fortress, and put in a cell. Next day the Prussian commandant, following the usage of the Prussian army, sentenced Harpin to fifty strokes with a stick. In vain did the dragoon protest that being a Frenchman they had no right to bring him under Prussian regulations; he was a prisoner, and his protest unheeded. He was actually being led to the wooden frame to which he was to be fastened, and two soldiers were making ready to inflict the punishment. At that moment, wanting to get a book out of Duroc's carriage, which was standing on the drill ground, I caught sight of Harpin struggling in the midst of the Prussian soldiers, who were trying to tie him up. Indignant at the sight of a French soldier about to be flogged, I flew towards him sword in hand, threatening to kill the first man who dared to put the disgrace of a blow on a soldier of the Emperor. The marshal's carriage was guarded by one of Napoleon's couriers, known in every post-house of Europe under the name of Moustache. This man was of herculean strength and approved courage, and had attended the Emperor on twenty battlefields. When he saw me surrounded by the Prussians, he ran to me and brought at my order four loaded pistols which were in the carriage. We set Harpin

loose; I gave him a brace of pistols, made him get into the carriage, and placing Moustache by him, declared to the quartermaster-sergeant that, as the carriage was the Emperor's and bore his arms, it was for the French dragoon a sanctuary which I forbade any Prussian to enter, on pain of getting a bullet through his head. At the same time I ordered Moustache and Harpin to fire if anyone attempted to get in. The quartermaster, seeing me resolute, left his prisoner for the moment to consult his superior officers. Then I left Moustache and Harpin, pistols in hand, in the carriage, and went to the King's quarters. There I requested an aide-de-camp to be so kind as to go into his Majesty's room and tell Marshal Duroc that I wished to speak to him on a matter of the utmost urgency. Duroc came out, and I reported what was going on.

On learning that they wanted to flog a French soldier, the marshal, sharing my indignation, returned straightway to the King, and protested warmly, adding that, if the sentence was carried out, he felt sure that the Emperor would take reprisals by flogging not soldiers, but Prussian officers who were prisoners of war. The King, a kindly man, saw that soldiers of other nations should be treated in accordance with their own point of honour, and gave orders that Harpin should be set at liberty. In order to please Napoleon, to whom he was at that moment suing for peace, he proposed to Duroc to exchange his hundred and fifty French prisoners for an equal number of Prussians. Duroc accepted, and an aide-de-camp of the King's went with me to announce the good news to the prisoners, who were overjoyed. We shipped them off at once, and an hour later they were across the Vistula, and with their comrades.

Marshal Duroc and I left Graudenz the next day. He approved what I had done, and told me afterwards that he had reported it to the Emperor, who quite agreed. So much so, that he had warned the Prussians and the Russians that, if they flogged any of his soldiers, he would shoot all their officers who fell into his hands.

I rejoined the 7th corps at Bromberg, and we soon

followed up the left bank of the Vistula, to approach Warsaw. Marshal Augereau's head-quarters were established at Mallochich. On December 19 the Emperor arrived at Warsaw, and prepared to cross the Vistula. Then the 7th corps marched down the left bank again to Utrata, and on the opposite bank we saw, for the first time in this campaign, the Russian outposts.

CHAPTER XXVIII

THE Vistula is rapid and broad. We expected that the Emperor would limit his winter operations to establishing his army, covered by the river, in cantonments until the spring. It turned out, however, otherwise. The corps of Davout and Lannes, with the Guard, crossed the Vistula at Warsaw; Augereau and his troops at Utrata, and marched on Plusk, whence we continued to the bank of the Wkra, one of the tributaries of the Bug. Having passed the Vistula the whole French army was in presence of the Russians, and the Emperor ordered an attack for December 24. A thaw and rain rendered evolutions exceedingly difficult on the clayey soil, for in this country there was no metalled road. Omitting the various engagements fought that day in forcing the passage of the Bug, I will only say that Augereau, having the duty of securing that of the Wkra, caused General Desjardins' division to attack Colozomb and General Heudelet's Sochocyn, directing the former attack in person. The Russians, after burning the existing bridge, had erected a redoubt on the left bank, defended by cannon and a strong force of infantry; but they forgot to destroy a store of timber and planks on the right bank by which we were coming up. Of these materials our sappers adroitly made use to construct a provisional bridge in face of a brisk fire from the enemy, which caused the loss of some men of the 14th of the line. The planks of the new bridge, not yet fixed, were swaying under the tread of our soldiers when the colonel of the 14th, M. Savary, brother of the Emperor's aide-de-camp, was rash enough to cross on horseback with a view of putting himself at the head of his skirmishers. Hardly had he landed on the opposite bank when a Cossack, galloping out, plunged

a lance into his heart and escaped into the woods. This was the fifth colonel whom the 14th had had killed before the enemy. You will see by-and-by what an evil fate always attended this unlucky regiment. The passage of the Wkra was carried, the guns were taken, the Russians put to flight, and Desjardins' division occupied Sochocyn, where the enemy had repulsed Heudelet's attack. As, however, one passage was enough, that attack had been quite unnecessary. Nevertheless, General Heudelet, in a fit of senseless pique, gave orders to renew it. He was again repulsed with some thirty men killed or wounded, among them a captain of engineers, a most promising officer. I have always felt disgusted by this contempt of human life, which at times leads generals to sacrifice their men to their desire of seeing themselves mentioned in despatches.

On the following day, December 25, the Emperor, driving the Russians in front of him, marched to Golymin, having with him his Guard, Murat's cavalry, and the corps of Davout and Augereau, the latter leading. Marshal Lannes took the direction of Pultusk. That day there were some trifling engagements, the enemy retiring with all speed; we bivouacked in the woods. On the 26th we continued in pursuit of the Russians. We were at the time of year when the days are shortest, and in that part of Poland the night at the end of December begins about half-past two. As we approached Golymin sleet was falling, which made it all the darker. We had not seen the enemy since the morning, when, close to Golymin, our scouts, perceiving in the dusk a strong body of troops, whom they could not approach by reason of marshy ground, brought information of them to the marshal. He ordered Colonel Albert to go and reconnoitre this corps with twenty-five mounted chasseurs of his escort, of whom I was put in command. It was a difficult task, for we were in a vast treeless plain, where one might easily go astray. The ground, muddy anyhow, was cut up by swamps, which we could not make out in the darkness; we therefore advanced cautiously, and at length found ourselves twenty-five paces from a line of troops. We supposed at first that it was

Davout's corps, but as no one answered our 'Who goes there?' we had no doubt that they belonged to the enemy. Still, to be quite certain, Colonel Albert ordered me to send forward the best mounted trooper to the line which we could perceive in the shadow. I selected a corporal named Schmidt, a man of tried courage. The brave man, advancing alone to within ten paces of a regiment which he recognised as Russian by its helmets, fired his carbine into the thick of the squadron and came quickly back.

In order to explain the silence which the enemy had kept, I must tell you that the Russian force which was in front of us had got separated from the main body, and had lost its way in the wide plains which it knew to be occupied by the French troops on their way to Golymin. The Russian generals, hoping under cover of the darkness to be able to pass near us without being recognised, had forbidden all speaking, and in the case of our attacking the wounded were to drop without uttering any sound. This order, which only Russian troops could carry out, was so punctually obeyed that when Colonel Albert, in order to let the marshal know that we were in presence of the enemy, ordered his twenty-five chasseurs to fire a volley, not a cry, not a word was heard, and no one replied to us. Only through the darkness we could perceive some hundred troopers silently advancing to cut off our retreat. Then we had to gallop to rejoin our column, but as many of our men got bogged we had to go less rapidly, although we were close pressed by the Russian horsemen, who fortunately met with the same difficulties as we did. Suddenly a fire broke out in a neighbouring farm, and the plain being thus lighted up, the Russians began to gallop, and we had to do the same. We were in imminent danger, because, having left the French line from General Desjardins' division, we were returning by the front of General Heudelet's. They, not knowing that we had gone, began to fire in the direction of the enemy, so that we had in the rear a Russian squadron pushing us hard, while we were met by a hail of bullets which wounded several of our troopers and horses. It was no good shouting, 'We are French; cease firing!' the

fire continued all the same. Nor can one blame the officers, who took us for the advanced guard of a Russian column, since their officers, in order to deceive us, often used the French language, and had by this means before now succeeded in surprising our regiments in the night. Colonel Albert and I, with the squad of chasseurs, had a very bad moment of it. At last it struck me that the only way to get recognised was to call out to the officers of Heudelet's division by their names, with which they would know that our enemies could not be acquainted. This plan answered, and we were at length admitted within the French lines.

The Russian generals, seeing that they were detected, and wishing to continue their retreat, took a step which I much approved, but which the French have never been able to make up their minds to copy. They pointed all their artillery in the direction of the French troops; then, having taken away their team horses, they opened a very heavy fire to keep us at a distance. Meantime, they caused their columns to march on, and when their ammunition was exhausted the gunners retired, leaving the guns to us. Was not this better worth while than to lose a number of men in trying to save this artillery, which would have stuck in the mud every moment and have delayed the retreat?

The violent cannonade of the Russians inflicted all the more loss on us that many of the villages in the plain being on fire, the light of them showing to a distance, allowed the enemy's gunners to make out the masses of our troops, especially those of the cuirassiers and dragoons whom Prince Murat had just brought up, and who, in their white cloaks, formed a good mark to the Russian artillerymen. Accordingly these troopers lost more heavily than the other regiments, and one of our dragoon generals, named Finérol, was cut in two by a cannon-ball. Marshal Augereau, after having carried the suburbs, entered Golymin while Davout was attacking it from another side. The Russian columns were at this moment passing through the town, and knowing that Marshal Lannes was marching to cut off their retreat by capturing Pultusk, three leagues farther on, they were try-

ing to reach that point before him at any price. Therefore, although our soldiers fired upon them at twenty-five paces, they continued their march without replying, because in order to do so they would have had to halt, and every moment was precious. So every division, every regiment, filed past, without saying a word or slackening its pace for a moment. The streets were filled with dying and wounded, but not a groan was to be heard, for they were forbidden. You might have said that we were firing upon shadows. At last our soldiers charged the Russian soldiers with the bayonet, and only when they pierced them could they be convinced that they were dealing with men. We took some thousand prisoners; the rest got off. The marshals debated whether they should pursue, but the weather was so horrible, the night so pitch-dark as soon as one was away from the neighbourhood of the burning houses, the troops so wet and weary, that it was decided to let them rest till daylight.

Golymin was heaped with dead, wounded, and baggage when Marshals Murat and Augereau, accompanied by many generals and their staffs, seeking shelter from the icy rain, established themselves in an immense stable near the town. There, each stretching himself on the dung-heap tried to get warm and to sleep, for we had been on horseback more than twenty hours in this frightful weather—the marshals, the colonels, all the bigwigs in short having, as was right, settled themselves towards the inner end of the stable, so as to be less cold. I, a poor lieutenant, having come in the last, was compelled to lie down close to the doorway, having at the best my body sheltered from the rain but exposed to an icy wind, for there were no doors. It was a disagreeable position when you add that I was dying of hunger, having eaten nothing since the day before. But my lucky star came once more to my help. While the great men, well-sheltered, were sleeping in the warm part of the stable, and the cold was preventing the lieutenants near the door from doing the same, a servant of Prince Murat presented himself at the entry. I remarked in a low voice that his master was asleep. So he gave me a basket for the prince, containing a

roast goose, some bread, and some wine, begging me to let his master know that the provision mules would come up in an hour. Having said which he went off to meet them. In possession of these victuals, I took counsel in a low voice with Bro, Mainvielle, and Stoch, who had just as bad places as I, and were just as shivering and hungry. The result of our deliberation was that as Prince Murat was asleep, and his canteen was bound to come up before long, he would find something for breakfast when he woke, while we should be sent off in all directions without any questions as to what we had got to eat; and that, in consequence, we might, without over-burdening our consciences, devour the contents of the basket; and we did so straightway. I do not know whether I may be forgiven for this page's trick: I only know that I have seldom made a pleasanter meal.

While the troops which had fought at Golymin were thus halted, Napoleon and his Guard were wandering in the plain, the Emperor, as soon as he was warned by the cannonade that an action was beginning, having hurriedly left his quarters two leagues from Golymin, in the hope of being able to reach us by marching straight upon the fire. But the ground was so sodden, the plain so cut up with swamps, and the weather so bad that it took him all night to cover the two leagues, and he only reached the field of battle long after the affair was at an end. On this same day Marshal Lannes with only 20,000 men fought 42,000 Russians at Pultusk, as they were retreating before the other French forces. He caused them great loss, but could not stop them owing to their greatly superior force.[1] For the Emperor to have been able to pursue the Russians, the ground ought to have been hardened by frost, whereas, on the contrary, it was so soft and saturated that we sank in at every step, and several men, notably the servant of an officer of the 7th corps, were drowned, men and horses, in the mud. It became therefore impossible to move the artillery and to push farther into this unknown land. Moreover, the troops were short both of provisions and of boots, and were extremely fatigued. These

[1] The French, in fact, were beaten, and Lannes wounded.

considerations decided Napoleon to allow them some days' rest, and to canton the whole army in front of the Vistula from the neighbourhood of Warsaw up to the gates of Dantzig. The soldiers were lodged in the villages, and, sheltered at last from the bad weather, received their rations, and were able to repair their accoutrements.

The Emperor returned to Warsaw to plan a new campaign. The divisions of Augereau's corps were distributed in the villages around Plusk, if one may give this name to a jumble of wretched hovels inhabited by dirty Jews. But nearly all the so-called towns of Poland are so built and so inhabited, the nobles, great and small, remaining always in the country, where they get their value out of their lands by employing their peasants on them. The marshal stayed at Christka, a kind of country house built, after the local fashion, of wood. He found a tolerable room there; the aides-de-camp settled themselves as best they could in the rooms and in the out-buildings. As for myself, by hunting about I found a pretty good room in the gardener's house, furnished with a stove. I established myself there with two of my comrades, and leaving the gardener and his family in possession of their not very inviting beds, we made some for ourselves with planks and straw, with which we did very well.

CHAPTER XXIX

At Christka we celebrated the New Year's Day of 1807, which was near being the last of my life. The year began, however, very pleasantly for me, for the Emperor, who had not granted any favour to Augereau's staff during the campaign of Austerlitz, repaired his neglect by heaping it with rewards. Colonel Albert was appointed major-general, Major Massy lieutenant-colonel of the 44th, several aides-de-camp were decorated, while Lieutenants Bro, Mainvielle, and I became captains. I was all the more pleased by this promotion that I did not expect it. I had done nothing to earn it, and I was only twenty-four years old. When handing our captains' commissions to Mainvielle, Bro, and myself, Marshal Augereau said: 'We will see which of you three will be colonel first.' It was I, for six years afterwards I was in command of a regiment while my two comrades were still only captains. But it is true that in that space of time I had been six times wounded. As soon as our cantonments were established the enemy took up theirs, fronting but pretty far from us. The Emperor expected that they would let us pass the winter in peace, but it was not so. We only got a month's rest, which was a good deal but not enough.

The Russians, seeing the ground covered with snow and hardened by some sharp frosts, thought that the severe weather would give the men of the North an advantage over the Southerners, little accustomed to endure great cold. Consequently they resolved to attack us, and to this end they caused the greater part of their troops, who were posted in face of ours before Warsaw, to pass in rear of the vast forests which separated them from us, and marched them

towards the Lower Vistula upon the cantonments of Bernadotte and Ney, hoping to surprise and crush them before the Emperor with the other corps could come to their support. But Bernadotte and Ney offered a valiant resistance, and Napoleon, warned in time, marched with a considerable force on the enemy's rear, who, threatened with being cut off from his base, retreated towards Königsberg. We had then, on February 1, to leave our comfortable cantonments, and again begin fighting and sleeping on the snow.

At the head of the centre column, commanded by the Emperor in person, marched Prince Murat's cavalry, then Soult's corps, supported by Augereau's; the Imperial Guard brought up the rear. Davout's corps marched on the right flank of the column, Ney's on the left. Such a body of troops making for the same point would soon exhaust the supplies which the country could furnish, and we suffered much from hunger; the Guard alone, having wagons, carried with it the means of providing rations. The other corps lived how they could—that is to say, they got scarcely anything.

There is little need for me to give many details of the affairs preceding the battle of Eylau, the more so that Augereau's troops, who formed the second line, took no part in them. The most important were those at Mohrungen, Bergfried, Guttstadt, and Waltersdorf. At length, on February 6, the Russians, whom we had pursued for eight days at the sword's point, resolved to halt and show firm front before the little town of Landsberg. They placed eight picked battalions in an excellent position near Hoff, their right resting on that village, their left on a thick wood, their centre covered by a deep and thick ravine, which could only be crossed by a very narrow bridge. The front of the line was defended by eight guns.

The Emperor, arriving with Murat's cavalry in front of this position, thought it better not to wait for Soult and the infantry, who were still some leagues to the rear, and ordered an attack to be made by several regiments of light cavalry. They crossed the ravine by the bridge, but were overwhelmed

by volleys of musketry and grape, and driven back in disorder into the ravine, whence they made their escape with much difficulty. Seeing that the efforts of the light cavalry were useless, the Emperor ordered forward a division of dragoons. Their attack was met in the same way, and had no better success. Then Napoleon ordered forward General d'Hautpoul's formidable cuirassiers, who, crossing the bridge and the ravine under a hail of bullets, fell upon the Russian line with such swiftness that they literally laid it flat. The slaughter was fearful; the cuirassiers, furious at the losses sustained by their comrades of the hussars and dragoons, nearly exterminated the eight Russian battalions; all were killed or taken prisoners. The field of battle was a horrible sight. Never was a cavalry charge so completely successful. To testify his satisfaction with the cuirassiers, the Emperor embraced their general in presence of the whole division. D'Hautpoul exclaimed, 'The only way to show myself worthy of such an honour is to get killed in your Majesty's service.' He kept his word, for the next day he died on the battlefield of Eylau. Such were the men of that time.

The enemy's army having witnessed from the high ground behind Landsberg the destruction of its rear-guard, retired promptly upon Eylau, and we took possession of Landsberg. On February 7 the Russian commander-in-chief, Bennigsen, having made up his mind to accept battle, concentrated his army round Eylau, especially on the position in rear of that town. Murat's cavalry and Soult's infantry captured the first position, but only after an obstinate fight, for the Russians thought it important to hold Ziegelhof, a point which commands Eylau, with the view of making it the centre of their line for the morrow's battle. They were, however, compelled to evacuate the town. Just as it began to seem as though night would put an end to this prelude to a general action, a brisk fusillade broke out in the streets of Eylau.

I know that some military writers on this campaign assert that the Emperor, not wishing to leave the town in

possession of the Russians, gave orders to attack it. I am sure that this is a very great mistake, and I base my assertion on the following facts. At the moment when the head of Marshal Augereau's column, coming up by the road from Landsberg, was approaching Ziegelhof, the marshal reached the summit of the plateau, where the Emperor already was, and I *heard* Napoleon say to him, 'They wanted me to carry Eylau this evening, but I do not like night fighting; and besides, I do not wish to push my centre too far forward before Davout has come up with the right wing and Ney with the left. I shall await them therefore till to-morrow on this high ground, which can be defended by artillery, and offers an excellent position for our infantry; and when Ney and Davout are in line we can march simultaneously on the enemy.' After saying this Napoleon gave orders for his bivouac to be arranged below Ziegelhof, and made his Guard encamp all round. But while the Emperor was thus explaining his plans to Marshal Augereau, who highly approved his prudence, the following events were taking place. The Imperial quartermasters, coming from Landsberg with their baggage and servants, had reached our advanced posts at the entrance of Eylau without anyone having told them to halt near Ziegelhof. These officials, who were accustomed to see the Imperial quarters always well guarded, and had not been warned that they were within a few paces of the Russians, thought only of choosing a good lodging for their master, and established themselves in the post-house, where they unpacked their apparatus, and set to work cooking, and stabling their horses. But in the midst of their preparations they were attacked by an enemy's patrol, and would have been captured but for the aid of the detachment of the Guard which always accompanied the Emperor's outfit. At the sound of the firing the troops of Marshal Soult, who were posted at the gates of the town, ran up to the rescue of Napoleon's baggage, and found the Russian troops already plundering it. The enemy's generals, thinking that the French wished to take possession of Eylau, sent up reinforcements on their side, so that a bloody engagement took

place in the streets of the town, which finally remained in our hands.

Though the attack had not been made by the Emperor's orders, he did not refuse to profit by it, and established himself accordingly in the posting-house at Eylau. His Guard and Soult's corps occupied the town, while Murat's cavalry was stationed round it. Augereau's troops were quartered in the little hamlet of Zehen. We had hoped to find some supplies there; but the Russians had plundered everything in their retreat, and our unlucky regiments, who had received no rations for a week, found no better comfort than potatoes and water. The store-wagons of the staff having been left at Landsberg, our supper was even less satisfactory than that of the men, for we could not get any potatoes. At eight in the morning, just as we were about to mount and advance, a servant brought a loaf to the marshal, who, with his usual kindness, shared it with his aides-de-camp. After this frugal meal—the last, as it turned out, which many of us ate—the corps proceeded to take up the position which the Emperor had assigned it.

In conformity with the plan of these Memoirs, I shall not give a detailed account of the battle of Eylau, but confine myself to relating the chief incidents. On the morning of February 8 the position of the armies was as follows. The Russian left was at Serpallen, their centre in front of Auklapen, their right at Schmoditten. They awaited 8,000 Prussians who were to debouch by Althoff, and form the extreme right. The front of the enemy's line was covered by 500 guns, a third at least of large calibre. The French were far less favourably situated, since the wings had not come up, and the Emperor had therefore to go into action with only a portion of the troops on which he had reckoned. Soult's corps was placed at right and left of Eylau, the Guard in the town, and Augereau's corps between Rothenen and Eylau, fronting towards Serpallen. The enemy thus formed a semi-circle, outflanking us, and the two forces occupied ground in which were numerous ponds, which, however, were covered by the snow. Neither side, therefore, noticed them, nor fired

ricochet shots to break the ice. If they had, there would have been a second Satschan disaster.[1]

Marshal Davout, who was expected on our right, towards Molwitten, and Marshal Ney, who was to form our left, on the side of Althoff, had not appeared when, soon after sunrise, about eight o'clock, the Russians began the attack by a violent cannonade. Our artillery, though inferior in numbers, replied; and all the more successfully that our gunners, who were by far the better trained, had masses of unsheltered men to aim at, while most of the Russian shot struck the walls of Rothenen and Eylau. Soon the enemy sent forward a strong column to carry the latter place; but it was smartly repulsed by the Guard and Soult's division. At the same moment the Emperor heard with joy that from the top of the church tower Davout's corps could be seen advancing. He came by Molwitten, and marching on Serpallen, drove in the Russian left, pushing them back to Klein Sausgarten.

Marshal Bennigsen, seeing his left beaten and his rear threatened by the bold Davout, resolved to crush him by superior force. Then Napoleon, in order to hinder this movement by a diversion against the enemy's centre, ordered Augereau to attack, though foreseeing that the operation would be difficult. But circumstances arise in battle in which some troops must be sacrificed to secure the safety and victory of the greater part. General Corbineau, the Emperor's aide-de-camp, was killed at our side by a cannon-ball, when bringing Augereau the order to advance. The marshal, passing with his two divisions between Eylau and Rothenen, proceeded boldly against the enemy's centre; and the 14th, our leading regiment, had already captured the position which the Emperor had given orders to carry and hold at all costs, when the heavy guns which were in a semicircle round Augereau belched forth such a hail of grape and canister as had never been seen within human memory. In one instant our two divisions were rent to pieces by the storm of iron. General Desjardins was killed, General Heudelet dangerously wounded.

[1] See p. 201.

Still they held their ground, until the army corps being almost entirely destroyed, its fragments had perforce to be recalled to the neighbourhood of the cemetery of Eylau; always excepting the 14th, who, wholly surrounded by the enemy, remained on the little hill which it had occupied. Our position was all the more grievous since a violent wind dashed the thickly-falling snow into our faces. It was impossible to see more than fifteen paces off, so that several French batteries fired upon us as well as those of the enemy. Marshal Augereau was wounded by a grape-shot.

Still the devotion of the 7th corps had produced a good effect, for not only had Davout, relieved by our attack, been able to hold his positions, but, further, he had captured Klein Sausgarten, and even pushed his advance-guard as far as Kuschitten, in rear of the enemy. At this moment the Emperor, wishing to strike the final blow, ordered Murat with ninety squadrons to advance between Eylau and Rothenen. The terrible weight of this mass broke the Russian centre, upon which it charged with the sabre, and threw it into complete disorder. The brave General d'Hautpoul was killed at the head of his cuirassiers, so also was General Dahlmann, who had succeeded General Morland in the command of the chasseurs of the guard.

The success of our cavalry made victory certain. In vain did 8,000 Prussians, who had escaped Ney's pursuit, advancing by way of Althoff, attempt a new attack. They bore (it is hard to say why) on Kuschitten, instead of marching on Eylau. Davout beat them back, and the arrival of Ney's corps, which appeared towards evening at Schmoditten, making Bennigsen fear that his communications might be cut, he gave orders for a retreat on Königsberg, leaving the French masters of that frightful battlefield covered with dying men and corpses. Never since the invention of gunpowder had its effects been so terrible. Of all battles, ancient or modern, Eylau was that in which the proportion of loss to combatants was greatest. The Russians had 25,000 men disabled, and although the number of French who were touched by steel or lead was reported at 10,000 only, I estimate them as at least

20,000. The total for the two armies was thus 45,000 men, of whom more than half died. Augereau's corps was almost entirely destroyed, since of 15,000 combatants present under arms when the action began, there remained in the evening only 3,000, commanded by Lieutenant-colonel Massy, the marshal, all the generals, and all the colonels having being killed or wounded.

It is difficult to understand why Bennigsen, knowing that Davout and Ney had not yet come up, did not profit by their absence to attack the town of Eylau at daybreak with his powerful centre, instead of wasting precious time in a cannonade. For his superior force would certainly have made him master of the town before Davout could come up, and then the Emperor would have been sorry that he advanced so far, instead of entrenching himself on the plateau of Ziegelhof, and there awaiting his wings as he had originally intended. The day after the battle he gave orders for a pursuit as far as the gates of Königsberg, but as the town was fortified it was not thought prudent to attack it with weakened forces, the more so that almost all the Russian army was in and about the place.

Napoleon passed several days at Eylau to restore the wounded and reorganise the armies. Augereau's corps having been almost destroyed, what was left of it was distributed among the other corps, and the marshal obtained leave to return to France to get cured of his wound. The Emperor, seeing that the main Russian army was at a distance,[1] cantoned his troops in the towns and villages on the east side of the Lower Vistula. The only thing that happened during the rest of the winter was the capture of Dantzig by the French.[2] Hostilities in the open did not recommence till the month of June, as we shall see in due course.

[1] The retreat of the enemy hardly appears an adequate reason for his own retreat to a point some hundred miles in rear of the field of battle. As a matter of fact, Napoleon was worse beaten at Eylau than it suited him to admit; and, but for the abominable state of the enemy's commissariat (that everlasting curse of Russian armies) and the slackness of the English Government, the retreat from Moscow might have been anticipated.

[2] In the following May. 'Winter,' of course, is used technically.

CHAPTER XXX

I DID not wish to interrupt my account of the battle of Eylau to tell you what befell me in that terrible conflict. To enable you to understand my story, I must go back to the autumn of 1805, when the officers of the Grand Army, among their preparations for the battle of Austerlitz, were completing their outfits. I had two good horses, the third, for whom I was looking, my charger, was to be better still. It was a difficult thing to find, for though horses were far less dear than now, their price was pretty high, and I had not much money; but chance served me admirably. I met a learned German, Herr von Aister, whom I had known when he was a professor at Sorèze. He had become tutor to the children of a rich Swiss banker, M. Scherer, established at Paris in partnership with M. Finguerlin. He informed me that M. Finguerlin, a wealthy man living in fine style, had a large stud, in the first rank of which figured a lovely mare, called Lisette, easy in her paces, as light as a deer, and so well broken that a child could lead her. But this mare, when she was ridden, had a terrible fault, and fortunately a rare one: she bit like a bulldog, and furiously attacked people whom she disliked, which decided M. Finguerlin to sell her. She was bought for Mme. de Lauriston, whose husband, one of the Emperor's aides-de-camp, had written to her to get his campaigning outfit ready. When selling the mare, M. Finguerlin had forgotten to mention her fault, and that very evening a groom was found disembowelled at her feet. Mme. de Lauriston, reasonably alarmed, brought an action to cancel the bargain; not only did she get her verdict, but, in order to prevent further disasters, the police ordered that a written statement should be placed in Lisette's stall to inform

purchasers of her ferocity, and that any bargain with regard to her should be void unless the purchaser declared in writing that his attention had been called to the notice. You may suppose that with such a character as this the mare was not easy to dispose of, and thus Herr von Aister informed me that her owner had decided to let her go for what anyone would give. I offered 1,000 francs, and M. Finguerlin delivered Lisette to me, though she had cost him 5,000. This animal gave me a good deal of trouble for some months. It took four or five men to saddle her, and you could only bridle her by covering her eyes and fastening all four legs; but once you were on her back, you found her a really incomparable mount.

However, since while in my possession she had already bitten several people, and had not spared me, I was thinking of parting with her. But I had meanwhile engaged in my service Francis Woirland, a man who was afraid of nothing, and he, before going near Lisette, whose bad character had been mentioned to him, armed himself with a good hot roast leg of mutton. When the animal flew at him to bite him, he held out the mutton; she seized it in her teeth, and burning her gums, palate, and tongue, gave a scream, let the mutton drop, and from that moment was perfectly submissive to Woirland, and did not venture to attack him again. I employed the same method with a like result. Lisette became as docile as a dog, and allowed me and my servant to approach her freely. She even became a little more tractable towards the stablemen of the staff, whom she saw every day, but woe to the strangers who passed near her! I could quote twenty instances of her ferocity, but I will confine myself to one. While Marshal Augereau was staying at the château of Bellevue, near Berlin, the servants of the staff, having observed that when they went to dinner someone stole the sacks of corn that were left in the stable, got Woirland to unfasten Lisette and leave her near the door. The thief arrived, slipped into the stable, and was in the act of carrying off a sack, when the mare seized him by the nape of the neck, dragged him into the middle of the yard and trampled

on him till she broke two of his ribs. At the shrieks of the thief, people ran up, but Lisette would not let him go till my servant and I compelled her, for in her fury she would have flown at anyone else. She had become still more vicious ever since the Saxon hussar officer, of whom I have told you, had treacherously laid open her shoulder with a sabre-cut on the battlefield of Jena.

Such was the mare which I was riding at Eylau at the moment when the fragments of Augereau's army corps, shattered by a hail of musketry and cannon-balls, were trying to rally near the great cemetery. You will remember how the 14th of the line had remained alone on a hillock, which it could not quit except by the Emperor's order. The snow had ceased for the moment; we could see how the intrepid regiment, surrounded by the enemy, was waving its eagle in the air to show that it still held its ground and asked for support. The Emperor, touched by the grand devotion of these brave men, resolved to try to save them, and ordered Augereau to send an officer to them with orders to leave the hillock, form a small square, and make their way towards us, while a brigade of cavalry should march in their direction and assist their efforts. This was before Murat's great charge. It was almost impossible to carry out the Emperor's wishes, because a swarm of Cossacks was between us and the 14th, and it was clear that any officer who was sent towards the unfortunate regiment would be killed or captured before he could get to it. But the order was positive, and the marshal had to comply.

It was customary in the Imperial army for the aides-de-camp to place themselves in file a few paces from their general, and for the one who was in front to go on duty first; then, when he had performed his mission, to return and place himself last, in order that each might carry orders in his turn, and dangers might be shared equally. A brave captain of engineers, named Froissard, who, though not an aide-de-camp, was on the marshal's staff, happened to be nearest to him, and was bidden to carry the order to the 14th. M. Froissard galloped off; we lost sight of him in the midst of

the Cossacks, and never saw him again nor heard what had become of him. The marshal, seeing that the 14th did not move, sent an officer named David; he had the same fate as Froissard: we never heard of him again. Probably both were killed and stripped, and could not be recognised among the many corpses which covered the ground. For the third time the marshal called, 'The officer for duty.' It was my turn.

Seeing the son of his old friend, and I venture to say his favourite aide-de-camp, come up, the kind marshal's face changed, and his eyes filled with tears, for he could not hide from himself that he was sending me to almost certain death. But the Emperor must be obeyed. I was a soldier; it was impossible to make one of my comrades go in my place, nor would I have allowed it; it would have been disgracing me. So I dashed off. But though ready to sacrifice my life I felt bound to take all necessary precautions to save it. I had observed that the two officers who went before me had gone with swords drawn, which led me to think that they had purposed to defend themselves against any Cossacks who might attack them on the way. Such defence, I thought, was ill-considered, since it must have compelled them to halt in order to fight a multitude of enemies, who would overwhelm them in the end. So I went otherwise to work, and leaving my sword in the scabbard, I regarded myself as a horseman who is trying to win a steeplechase, and goes as quickly as possible and by the shortest line towards the appointed goal, without troubling himself with what is to right or left of his path. Now, as my goal was the hillock occupied by the 14th, I resolved to get there without taking any notice of the Cossacks, whom in thought I abolished. This plan answered perfectly. Lisette, lighter than a swallow and flying rather than running, devoured the intervening space, leaping the piles of dead men and horses, the ditches, the broken gun-carriages, and the half-extinguished bivouac fires. Thousands of Cossacks swarmed over the plain. The first who saw me acted like sportsmen who, when beating, start a hare, and announce its presence to each other by shouts of 'Your side! Your side!' but none of the Cossacks tried to

stop me, first, on account of the extreme rapidity of my pace, and also probably because, their numbers being so great, each thought that I could not avoid his comrades farther on; so that I escaped them all, and reached the 14th regiment without either myself or my excellent mare having received the slightest scratch.

I found the 14th formed in square on the top of the hillock, but as the slope was very slight the enemy's cavalry had been able to deliver several charges. These had been vigorously repulsed, and the French regiment was surrounded by a circle of dead horses and dragoons, which formed a kind of rampart, making the position by this time almost inaccessible to cavalry; as I found, for in spite of the aid of our men, I had much difficulty in passing over this horrible entrenchment. At last I was in the square. Since Colonel Salary's death at the passage of the Wkra, the 14th had been commanded by a major. While I imparted to this officer, under a hail of balls, the order to quit his position and try to rejoin his corps, he pointed out to me that the enemy's artillery had been firing on the 14th for an hour, and had caused it such loss that the handful of soldiers which remained would inevitably be exterminated if they went down into the plain, and that, moreover, there would not be time to prepare to execute such a movement, since a Russian column was marching on him, and was not more than a hundred paces away. 'I see no means of saving the regiment,' said the major; 'return to the Emperor, bid him farewell from the 14th of the line, which has faithfully executed his orders, and bear to him the eagle which he gave us, and which we can defend no longer: it would add too much to the pain of death to see it fall into the hands of the enemy.' Then the major handed me his eagle. Saluted for the last time by the glorious fragment of the intrepid regiment with cries of 'Vive l'Empereur!' they were going to die for him. It was the *Cæsar morituri te salutant* of Tacitus,[1] but in this case the cry was uttered by heroes. The infantry eagles were very heavy, and their weight was

[1] As a matter of fact, Suetonius.

increased by a stout oak pole on the top of which they were fixed. The length of the pole embarrassed me much, and as the stick without the eagle could not constitute a trophy for the enemy, I resolved with the major's consent to break it and only carry off the eagle. But at the moment when I was leaning forward from my saddle in order to get a better purchase to separate the eagle from the pole, one of the numerous cannon-balls which the Russians were sending at us went through the hinder peak of my hat, less than an inch from my head. The shock was all the more terrible since my hat being fastened on by a strong leather strap under the chin offered more resistance to the blow. I seemed to be blotted out of existence, but I did not fall from my horse; blood flowed from my nose, my ears, and even my eyes; nevertheless, I still could hear and see, and I preserved all my intellectual faculties, although my limbs were paralysed to such an extent that I could not move a single finger.

Meanwhile the column of Russian infantry which we had just perceived was mounting the hill; they were grenadiers wearing mitre-shaped caps with metal ornaments. Soaked with spirits, and in vastly superior numbers, these men hurled themselves furiously on the feeble remains of the unfortunate 14th, whose soldiers had for several days been living only on potatoes and melted snow; that day they had not had time to prepare even this wretched meal. Still our brave Frenchmen made a valiant defence with their bayonets, and when the square had been broken, they held together in groups and sustained the unequal fight for a long time.

During this terrible struggle several of our men, in order not to be struck from behind, set their backs against my mare's flanks, she, contrary to her practice, remaining perfectly quiet. If I had been able to move I should have urged her forward to get away from this field of slaughter. But it was absolutely impossible for me to press my legs so as to make the animal I rode understand my wish. My position was the more frightful since, as I have said, I retained the power of sight and thought. Not only were they fighting all round me, which exposed me to bayonet-

thrusts, but a Russian officer with a hideous countenance kept making efforts to run me through. As the crowd of combatants prevented him from reaching me, he pointed me out to the soldiers around him, and they, taking me for the commander of the French, as I was the only mounted man, kept firing at me over their comrades' heads, so that bullets were constantly whistling past my ear. One of them would certainly have taken away the small amount of life that was still in me had not a terrible incident led to my escape from the mêlée.

Among the Frenchmen who had got their flanks against my mare's near flank was a quartermaster-sergeant, whom I knew from having frequently seen him at the marshal's, making copies for him of the 'morning states.' This man, having been attacked and wounded by several of the enemy, fell under Lisette's belly, and was seizing my leg to pull himself up, when a Russian grenadier, too drunk to stand steady, wishing to finish him by a thrust in the breast, lost his balance, and the point of his bayonet went astray into my cloak, which at that moment was puffed out by the wind. Seeing that I did not fall, the Russian left the sergeant and aimed a great number of blows at me. These were at first fruitless, but one at last reached me, piercing my left arm, and I felt with a kind of horrible pleasure my blood flowing hot. The Russian grenadier with redoubled fury made another thrust at me, but, stumbling with the force which he put into it, drove his bayonet into my mare's thigh. Her ferocious instincts being restored by the pain, she sprang at the Russian, and at one mouthful tore off his nose, lips, eyebrows, and all the skin of his face, making of him a living death's-head, dripping with blood. Then hurling herself with fury among the combatants, kicking and biting, Lisette upset everything that she met on her road. The officer who had made so many attempts to strike me tried to hold her by the bridle; she seized him by his belly, and carrying him off with ease, she bore him out of the crush to the foot of the hillock, where, having torn out his entrails and mashed his body under her feet, she left him dying on the snow.

Then, taking the road by which she had come, she made her way at full gallop towards the cemetery of Eylau. Thanks to the hussar's saddle on which I was sitting I kept my seat. But a new danger awaited me. The snow had begun to fall again, and great flakes obscured the daylight when, having arrived close to Eylau, I found myself in front of a battalion of the Old Guard, who, unable to see clearly at a distance, took me for an enemy's officer leading a charge of cavalry. The whole battalion at once opened fire on me; my cloak and my saddle were riddled, but I was not wounded nor was my mare. She continued her rapid course, and went through the three ranks of the battalion as easily as a snake through a hedge. But this last spurt had exhausted Lisette's strength; she had lost much blood, for one of the large veins in her thigh had been divided, and the poor animal collapsed suddenly and fell on one side, rolling me over on the other.

Stretched on the snow among the piles of dead and dying, unable to move in any way, I gradually and without pain lost consciousness. I felt as if I was being gently rocked to sleep. At last I fainted quite away without being revived by the mighty clatter which Murat's ninety squadrons advancing to the charge must have made in passing close to me and perhaps over me. I judge that my swoon lasted four hours, and when I came to my senses I found myself in this horrible position. I was completely naked, having nothing on but my hat and my right boot. A man of the transport corps, thinking me dead, had stripped me in the usual fashion, and wishing to pull off the only boot that remained, was dragging me by one leg with his foot against my body. The jerks which the man gave me no doubt had restored me to my senses. I succeeded in sitting up and spitting out the clots of blood from my throat. The shock caused by the wind of the ball had produced such an extravasation of blood, that my face, shoulders, and chest were black, while the rest of my body was stained red by the blood from my wound. My hat and my hair were full of bloodstained snow, and as I rolled my haggard eyes I must have been horrible to see. Anyhow, the transport

man looked the other way, and went off with my property without my being able to say a single word to him, so utterly prostrate was I. But I had recovered my mental faculties, and my thoughts turned towards God and my mother.

The setting sun cast some feeble rays through the clouds. I took what I believed to be a last farewell of it. 'If,' thought I, 'I had only not been stripped, some one of the numerous people who pass near me would notice the gold lace on my pelisse, and, recognising that I am a marshal's aide-de-camp, would perhaps have me carried to the ambulance. But seeing me naked, they do not distinguish me from the corpses with which I am surrounded, and, indeed, there soon will be no difference between them and me. I cannot call help, and the approaching night will take away all hope of succour. The cold is increasing: shall I be able to bear it till to-morrow, seeing that I feel my naked limbs stiffening already?' So I made up my mind to die, for if I had been saved by a miracle in the midst of the terrible mêlée between the Russians and the 14th, could I expect that there would be a second miracle to extract me from my present horrible position? The second miracle did take place in the following manner. Marshal Augereau had a valet named Pierre Dannel, a very intelligent and very faithful fellow, but somewhat given to arguing. Now it happened during our stay at La Houssaye that Dannel, having answered his master, got dismissed. In despair, he begged me to plead for him. This I did so zealously that I succeeded in getting him taken back into favour. From that time the valet had been devotedly attached to me. The outfit having been all left behind at Landsberg, he had started all out of his own head on the day of battle to bring provisions to his master. He had placed these in a very light wagon which could go everywhere, and contained the articles which the marshal most frequently required. This little wagon was driven by a soldier belonging to the same company of the transport corps as the man who had just stripped me. This latter, with my property in his hands, passed near the wagon, which was standing at

the side of the cemetery, and, recognising the driver, his old comrade, he hailed him and showed him the splendid booty which he had just taken from a dead man.

Now you must know that while we were in cantonments on the Vistula the marshal happened to send Dannel to Warsaw for provisions, and I commissioned him to get the trimming of black astrachan taken from my pelisse and have it replaced by grey, this having recently been adopted by Prince Berthier's aides-de-camp, who set the fashion in the army. Up to now I was the only one of Augereau's officers who had grey astrachan. Dannel, who was present when the transport man made his display, quickly recognised my pelisse, which made him look more closely at the other effects of the alleged dead man. Among these he found my watch, which had belonged to my father and was marked with his cypher. The valet had no longer any doubt that I had been killed, and while deploring my loss, he wished to see me for the last time. Guided by the transport man he reached me and found me living. Great was the joy of this worthy man, to whom I certainly owed my life. He made haste to fetch my servant and some orderlies, and had me carried to a barn, where he rubbed my body with rum. Meanwhile someone went to fetch Dr. Raymond, who came at length, dressed the wound in my arm, and declared that the release of blood due to it would be the saving of me.

My brother and my comrades were quickly round me; something was given to the transport soldier who had taken my clothes, which he returned very willingly, but as they were saturated with water and with blood, Marshal Augereau had me wrapped in things belonging to himself. The Emperor had given the marshal leave to go to Landsberg, but as his wound forbade him to ride, his aides-de-camp had procured a sledge on which the body of a carriage had been placed. The marshal, who could not make up his mind to leave me, had me fastened up beside him, for I was too weak to sit upright.

Before I was removed from the field of battle I had seen my poor Lisette near me. The cold had caused the blood

from her wound to clot, and prevented the loss from being too great. The creature had got on to her legs and was eating the straw which the soldiers had used the night before for their bivouacs. My servant, who was very fond of Lisette, had noticed her when he was helping to remove me, and cutting up into bandages the shirt and hood of a dead soldier he wrapped her leg with them, and thus made her able to walk to Landsberg. The officer in command of the small garrison there had had the forethought to get quarters ready for the wounded, so the staff found places in a large and good inn.

In this way, instead of passing the night without help, stretched naked on the snow, I lay in a good bed surrounded by the attention of my brother, my comrades, and the kind Dr. Raymond. The doctor had been obliged to cut off the boot which the transport man had not been able to pull off, and which had become all the more difficult to remove owing to the swelling of my foot. You will see presently that this very nearly cost me my leg and perhaps my life.

We stayed thirty-six hours at Landsberg. This rest, and the good care taken of me, restored me the use of speech and senses; and when on the second day after the battle Marshal Augereau started for Warsaw, I was able to be carried in the sledge. The journey lasted eight days. Gradually I recovered strength, but as strength returned I began to feel a sensation of icy cold in my right foot. At Warsaw I was lodged in the house that had been taken for the marshal, which suited me the better that I was not able to leave my bed. Yet the wound in my arm was doing well, the extravasated blood was becoming absorbed, my skin was recovering its natural colour. The doctor knew not to what he could ascribe my inability to rise, till, hearing me complain of my leg, he examined it, and found that my foot was gangrened. An accident of my early days was the cause of this new trouble. At Sorèze I had my right foot wounded by the unbuttoned foil of a schoolfellow with whom I was fencing. It seemed that the muscles of the part had become sensitive, and had suffered much from cold while I was lying unconscious on the field of Eylau; thence had resulted a swelling

which explained the difficulty experienced by the soldier in dragging off my right boot. The foot was frost-bitten, and as it had not been treated in time, gangrene had appeared in the site of the old wound from the foil. The place was covered with an eschar as large as a five-franc piece. The doctor turned pale when he saw the foot; then, making four servants hold me, and taking his knife, he lifted the eschar, and dug the mortified flesh from my foot just as one cuts the damaged part out of an apple. The pain was great, but I did not complain. It was otherwise, however, when the knife reached the living flesh, and laid bare the muscles and bones till one could see them moving. Then the doctor, standing on a chair, soaked a sponge in hot sweetened wine, and let it fall drop by drop into the hole which he had just dug in my foot. The pain became unbearable. Still, for eight days I had to undergo this torture morning and evening, but my leg was saved.

Nowadays, when promotions and decorations are bestowed so lavishly, some reward would certainly be given to an officer who had braved danger as I had done in reaching the 14th regiment; but under the Empire a devoted act of that kind was thought so natural that I did not receive the cross, nor did it ever occur to me to ask for it. A long rest having been ordered for the cure of Marshal Augereau's wound, the Emperor wrote to bid him return for treatment to France, and sent to Italy for Masséna, to whom my brother, Bro, and several of my comrades were attached. Augereau took me with him, as well as Dr. Raymond and his secretary. I had to be lifted in and out of the carriage; otherwise I found my health coming back as I got away from those icy regions towards a milder climate. My mare passed the winter in the stables of M. de Launay, head of the forage department. Our road lay through Silesia. So long as we were in that horrible Poland, it required twelve, sometimes sixteen, horses to draw the carriage at a walk through the bogs and quagmires; but in Germany we found at length civilisation and real roads.

After a halt at Dresden, and ten or twelve days' stay at

Frankfort, we reached Paris about March 15. I walked very lame, wore my arm in a sling, and still felt the terrible shaking caused by the wind of the cannon-ball; but the joy of seeing my mother again, and her kind care of me, together with the sweet influences of the spring, completed my cure. Before leaving Warsaw I had meant to throw away the hat which the ball had pierced, but the marshal kept it as a curiosity and gave it to my mother. It still exists in my possession, and should be kept as a family relic.

CHAPTER XXXI

At Paris I remained the rest of March, all April, and the first week of May. It was during this stay that I made the acquaintance of the Desbrières family, with whom I was shortly to become connected. As soon as my health was restored, I felt that I could not stay longer at Paris. Marshal Augereau recommended me to Marshal Lannes, who received me very cordially on his staff. In order to be in a position to watch the enemy's movements during the winter, the Emperor had taken up his quarters in the midst of the cantonments of the troops, first at Osterode, then at the château of Finkenstein, whence, while making ready for a new campaign, he governed France and gave instructions to his ministers, receiving their reports every week. The portfolios containing the various papers from each minister were sent every Wednesday evening to M. Denniée, under-secretary of state for war, who sent them off every Thursday morning. The duty of conveying them to the Emperor was entrusted to a clerk, but the service was badly performed, since the majority of the clerks had never been out of France, could not speak a word of German, and knew neither the money nor the postal regulations of foreign countries, so that the moment they had crossed the Rhine they were quite helpless. Besides, these gentlemen, not being accustomed to fatigue, very soon broke down under a journey of more than 300 leagues, requiring continuous travelling ten days and nights. One of them was even careless enough to let his despatches be stolen.

Furious at this mischance, Napoleon sent a mounted messenger to Paris ordering M. Denniée to entrust the portfolios in future only to officers who knew German, and who

were enough accustomed to roughing it to be able to fulfil the mission more efficiently. M. Denniée was at a loss to find one when I presented myself with Marshal Lannes' letter summoning me to join him. Delighted at seeing a way of quickly getting off his portfolios with safety, he bade me get ready by the following Thursday, and gave me 5,000 francs for posting expenses and the purchase of a carriage. This suited me very well, as I had very little money with which to rejoin the army at the other end of Poland.

We left Paris about May 10; my servant and I were well armed, and whenever one of us was compelled to leave the carriage for a moment the other kept guard. We knew enough German to hurry along the postilions, who were far more amenable to an officer in uniform than to the clerks. Thus, instead of requiring, like those gentlemen, nine days and a half, or, perhaps, ten days to get from Paris to Finkenstein, I did the journey in eight days and a half.

The Emperor, delighted at getting his despatches twenty-four hours quicker, began by praising my zeal which had induced me to return to the army in spite of my recent wounds, and added that, as I was such a good postman, I was to start back that same night for Paris and bring back some more portfolios. This would not hinder me from being present when hostilities recommenced, which could not be until the beginning of June.

Although I had not by a long way spent the 5,000 francs which M. Denniée had handed me, the marshal of the Palace gave me the same amount for my return journey. I went back to Paris at full speed, remained twenty-four hours there, and started back for Poland. The minister of war handed me another 5,000 francs for the third journey; it was a good deal more than was necessary, but such were the Emperor's orders. It is true that the journeys were very tiring, and still more tedious, although the weather was very fine. I was on wheels day and night for nearly a month, with my servant as my sole companion. I found the Emperor again at the château of Finkenstein. I was afraid that just when fighting was going to begin I should have to go on acting

postman; but luckily officers had been found to carry the despatches, and the service was already organised. The Emperor gave me leave to rejoin Marshal Lannes, which I did at Marienburg on May 25. Colonel Sicard, Augereau's aide-de-camp, was with him, and had been kind enough to bring my horses. It was a great pleasure to see again my dear mare Lisette, who was still capable of doing good service.

The fortress of Dantzig, which the French had besieged during the winter, had fallen into their hands. The return of the summer soon caused the campaign to be re-opened. The Russians beat up our cantonments on June 5, and were smartly repulsed at all points. At Heilsberg on the 10th there was an engagement sanguinary enough to have been dignified by some historians into a battle, the enemy being again beaten. I shall not give any details of this affair, because Marshal Lannes' corps only came up at nightfall and took very little part in it. We received, however, a pretty good number of shot, one of which inflicted a mortal wound on Colonel Sicard, who had been struck by a bullet at Eylau, and was hardly cured when he came back to fight afresh. Before dying he bade me take farewell of Augereau for him, and gave me a letter for his wife. It was a sad scene and distressed me much.

In our pursuit of the Russians we passed by Eylau. Three months before we had left the fields covered with snow and corpses, now they presented a lovely carpet of green, studded with flowers. What a contrast! How many brave fighting men were resting under those green meadows! I went and sat down at the very place where I had fallen, where I had been stripped, where I must have died if a combination of really providential events had not saved me. Marshal Lannes wanted to see the hillock where the 14th had made such a gallant defence, and I took him there. The enemy had occupied this ground since the battle, but in spite of this we found no damage done to the monument which all the regiments of the French army had put up to their ill-fated comrades of the 14th, thirty-six of whose officers had

been buried in the same trench. This respect for the fame of the dead does honour to the Russians. I halted for a few moments on the place where I had received the cannon-ball in my hat and the bayonet-wound, and thought of the brave men who lay beneath in the dust and whose fate I had gone so near to sharing.

After their defeat at Heilsberg on the 10th of June, the Russians made a headlong retreat and gained a day's march on the French, who, on the evening of the 13th, were assembled in advance of Eylau on the left bank of the Alle. The enemy occupied Bartenstein on the right bank, and the two forces descended the river, marching parallel with each other. Bennigsen, having his base of supplies at Königsberg, where the Prussian army was, planned to reach that town before the French army could come up; but to do this, he had to cross to the left bank of the Alle, along which Napoleon was marching from Eylau. The Russian general hoped to reach Friedland sufficiently in advance to be able to cross the river unopposed. But the same motives which made Bennigsen wish to keep Königsberg made it to the Emperor's interest to capture it, and for some days he had been manœuvring to outflank the enemy's left, in order to draw them away from the place; while he had detached Soult, Murat, and Davout towards it, in order to meet the Russians if they got there first. But he was not satisfied with this precaution. Foreseeing that in order to reach Königsberg the Russians would seek to cross the Alle at Friedland, he determined to occupy that town before them. In the night between June 13 and 14 he sent forward the corps of Marshals Lannes and Mortier, with three divisions of cavalry. The rest of the army was to follow. Lannes, who, with Oudinot's grenadiers and a brigade of cavalry, formed the advance, reached Posthenen, one league short of Friedland, at 2 A.M., and sent the 9th hussars to reconnoitre the latter town. They were driven back with loss, and the rising sun enabled us to see a large part of the Russian army massed on the other side of the river, on the high table-land between Allenau and Friedland. The enemy was beginning to cross the old

bridge of the town, close to which he had constructed two new ones.

The aim which each side had in view was easy to understand. The Russians wished to cross the Alle and reach Königsberg; the French wished to hinder them, and roll them back from the other side of the river, the banks of which are very steep. There is no bridge save that at Friedland. The difficulty which the Russians had in debouching from the town into the plain on the left bank was increased by the fact that the issue from Friedland is narrowed at that spot by a largish lake, as well as by a stream called the Millstream, which runs in a deep and narrow ravine. To cover his passage, the enemy had thrown up two powerful batteries on the right bank, commanding the town, and part of the plain between Posthenen and Heinrichsdorf. The objects and respective positions of the two armies being thus made clear, I will briefly set out the chief incidents of this decisive battle, which led to a peace.

The Emperor was still at Eylau. The various army corps were marching on Friedland, from which they were several leagues distant, when Lannes, who had marched all night, arrived before the town. If the marshal had only listened to his own eagerness he would have attacked the enemy on the spot, but they had already 30,000 men in position on the plain in front of Friedland, and their lines, the right of which was in front of Heinrichsdorf, the centre on the Millstream, and the left on the village of Sortlack, were being continually strengthened, while Lannes had only 10,000 men. These, however, he placed very skilfully in the village of Posthenen, and in the wood of Sortlack, whence he threatened the Russian left, while, with two divisions of cavalry, he tried to stop their march on Heinrichsdorf, a village on the road from Friedland to Königsberg. A brisk fire was opened, but Marshal Mortier's corps appeared without delay, and in order to dispute the way to Königsberg with the Russians, while he waited for reinforcements, he occupied Heinrichsdorf and the space between that village and Posthenen. Still, it was not possible that Mortier and

Lannes could, with 25,000 men, make head against the 70,000 Russians who would shortly face them. The moment was becoming very critical. Marshal Lannes was sending officers every instant to warn the Emperor to hurry up the army corps which he knew were on the march behind him. I was the first sent, and, mounted on my swift Lisette, I met the Emperor leaving Eylau and found him beaming. He made me come to his side, and as we galloped I had to give him an account of all that had taken place before I had left the field of battle. When I had ended my report the Emperor said smiling, 'Have you a good memory?' 'Pretty fair, sir.' 'Well, what anniversary is it to-day, 14th June?' 'Marengo.' 'Yes,' replied the Emperor, 'that of Marengo; and I am going to beat the Russians as I beat the Austrians.' So convinced was Napoleon on this point that as he rode along the columns, and while the soldiers saluted him with frequent cheers, he repeatedly said to them, 'To-day is a lucky day, the anniversary of Marengo.

CHAPTER XXXII

It was past eleven when the Emperor arrived on the field of battle, where several army corps had already joined Lannes and Mortier. The rest, with the guard, came up in due course. Napoleon rectified the lines. Ney commanded the right wing, which was placed in the wood of Sortlack, Lannes and Mortier the centre, between Posthenen and Heinrichsdorf, the left extended beyond the last-named village. It was oppressively hot; the Emperor allowed the troops an hour's rest, and settled that at a signal given by twenty-five guns firing simultaneously, a general attack should be made. Marshal Ney's corps had the roughest task. Concealed in the wood of Sortlack, it had to issue from it and make its way into Friedland, where the enemy's main force and reserves were massed, capture the bridges, and thus cut off the Russians' retreat entirely. It is difficult to understand how Bennigsen could have made up his mind to place his army in advance of the Friedland defile, where it had in rear the Alle, with its steep banks, and before it the French, who held the plain. To account for his action, the Russian general explained later on that, being a day's march ahead of Napoleon, and not being able to conceive that the French could cover in twelve hours a distance equal to that which his troops had taken twenty-four to traverse, he had supposed, when he found Lannes' corps at Friedland, that it was an isolated advanced guard of the French army, which he would have no difficulty in crushing, and that, when he discovered his error, it was too late to bring his army back to the other side of the Alle, because the Friedland defile would have caused him a certain loss, so that he preferred to fight with vigour.

About 1 P.M. the twenty-five cannons at Posthenen fired simultaneously by the Emperor's order, and battle was joined

all along the line. Our left and our centre advanced at first very slowly, in order to give the right, under Ney, time to carry the town. The marshal, issuing from the wood at Sortlack, captured the village of that name and advanced very quickly on Friedland, clearing everything on his road. But in the passing from the wood and village of Sortlack to the first houses of Friedland, the troops had to march without cover, and found themselves exposed to a terrible fire from the Russian batteries, which, being placed in rear of the town on the high ground of the opposite bank, caused them immense loss. What made the fire more dangerous was that the enemy's gunners, having the river between us and them, could aim in security, since they saw that it was impossible for our infantry to attack them. This serious disadvantage might have prevented the capture of Friedland, but Napoleon remedied it by sending fifty guns, which were placed by General Sénarmont and fired across the river at the Russian batteries, pouring upon them such a hail of shot as must soon have dismounted them. As soon as the fire of the enemy's guns was silenced, Ney continued his bold march, rolled back the Russians in Friedland, and entered pell-mell with them into the streets of the unlucky town, which the shells had already set on fire. There was a terrible bayonet fight, and the Russians, crowded one upon another and hardly able to move, lost very heavily. Ultimately they were obliged, in spite of their courage, to retire in disorder, and seek a refuge on the opposite bank, crossing the bridges again. But here a new danger awaited them. General Sénarmont's artillery, having drawn near the town, took the bridges in flank, and soon broke them, after killing a great number of the Russians who were crossing them in their hurried flight. All who still remained in Friedland were captured, killed, or drowned in crossing the river.

Up to this time Napoleon had, so to say, made his centre and left wing mark time. Now he pushed them rapidly forward. The Russian general, Gortschakoff, who commanded the enemy's centre and right wing, obeying merely his own courage, wished to recapture the town. This would have

been of no use to him, since the bridges were broken, but that he did not know. So he dashed forwards at the head of his troops into Friedland, blazing as it was. But repulsed in front by Ney's troops, who occupied the town, and compelled to regain the open country, the enemy's general soon found himself surrounded by our centre, which pushed him back on the Alle, in front of Kloschenen. The Russians defended themselves with furious heroism, and though driven in on all sides refused to surrender. A large part fell under our bayonets, and the rest were rolled back from the top of the bank into the river, where nearly all were drowned.

The enemy's extreme right, consisting chiefly of cavalry, had attempted to carry or turn the village of Heinrichsdorf. But repulsed briskly by our troops, it had regained the banks of the Alle, under command of General Lambert. Seeing Friedland occupied by the French, and the Russian left and centre destroyed, he rallied as many regiments as he could of the right wing, and escaped from the field of battle by descending the Alle. Night prevented the French from pursuing,[1] so that of all the enemy's corps this alone escaped utter rout. Our victory was most complete; all the Russian artillery fell into our hands. We had taken few prisoners during the action, but the numbers of the enemy killed and wounded amounted to more than 26,000. Our loss was only 3,000 killed and 4,000 to 5,000 wounded. Of all the battles fought by the Emperor, this was the *only one*[2] in which his troops outnumbered those of the enemy. The French had 80,000 combatants, the Russians only 75,000. The remains of the enemy's army marched in disorder all night, and retired behind the Pregel, destroying the bridges.

Marshals Soult, Davout, and Murat had not been able to take part in the battle, but their appearance had decided the Prussians to abandon Königsberg, and our troops took possession of it, finding there immense stores of all kinds.

No accident befell me during the battle of Friedland,

[1] June 14. Latitude 53°.

[2] The italics are the author's. Napoleon's bulletins after the battles no doubt usually contained a statement to a similar effect, but subsequent investigation tends to show that the statement was not always strictly correct.

although I was exposed to very great dangers on this wise. You saw me starting in the morning from Posthenen by order of Marshal Lannes to go at full speed and warn the Emperor that the enemy was crossing the Alle at Friedland, and a battle appeared imminent. Napoleon was at Eylau, and I had, therefore, nearly six leagues to go in order to meet him, which would have been a small matter for my excellent mare if the roads had been clear. But encumbered as they were by the troops of the various corps coming up with all haste to support Marshal Lannes, I found it absolutely impossible to gallop if I kept the road, so I went across country, with the result that Lisette, having had to jump fences, hedges, and ditches, was pretty well blown when I joined the Emperor, coming out of Eylau. But I had, without taking a moment's rest, to return with him to Friedland, and although this time the troops drew up to let us pass, my poor mare, who had galloped twelve leagues at a stretch, six of them across country, and on a very hot day, was completely beaten when I reached the field of battle and rejoined Marshal Lannes. I saw that Lisette could do no more service during the action, so I took advantage of the moment's rest which the Emperor allowed the troops to try to find my servant and change horses. But in the midst of an army of that size how was I to find my belongings? It was impossible, so I returned to the staff, still mounted on the blown Lisette.

Marshal Lannes and my comrades, seeing the fix I was in, advised me to dismount, and let my mare rest for a few hours. At that moment I saw one of our hussars leading a horse which he had captured. I bought it, and entrusting Lisette to a trooper of the marshal's escort to take her to the rear and feed her, and hand her over to my servant whenever he saw him, I mounted my new horse, resumed my place among the aides-de-camp, and took my turns of duty. At first I was well satisfied with my mount, until Lannes sent me off to Ney, who was by that time in Friedland, to warn him of a movement which the enemy was making. Hardly was I in the town when my devil of a horse, who had be-

haved so well in the open country, finding himself in a little square with houses on fire all round, the pavement covered with burning furniture and timber, and many half-roasted corpses, was so terrified by the sight of the flames and the odour of burning flesh, that he refused to advance or retreat. Putting his four feet together, he stood stock still and snorted violently, without taking the slightest notice of the spur, which I vigorously applied. Meanwhile, the Russians, having gained a momentary advantage in a street close by, were pushing our troops back to the place where I was, and were pouring a hail of bullets from a church tower and the neighbouring houses all about me, at the same time plying the battalions by whom I was surrounded with grape from two guns which they had dragged up. Many men fell all round me, and I was reminded of the position in which I had found myself at Eylau. As I had no curiosity whatever to see what another wound felt like, and besides, so long as I stayed there I could not fulfil my errand, I just got off, and, leaving my infernal horse, slipped along the houses to go and join Ney, who was in another square which the officers pointed out to me. I remained a quarter of an hour with him; plenty of bullets were dropping there, but nothing like so many as in the place where I had left my horse. Finally, a bayonet charge drove back the Russians, and compelled them to retire on all sides towards the bridges. Ney bade me take the good news to Lannes. I returned by the same way which I taken in coming, and passed again the spot where I had left my horse. It had been the scene of a sanguinary fight; nothing was to be seen but dead and dying, and in the middle of them was the obstinate horse, his back broken by a cannon-ball, and his body riddled with bullets.

I hurried on to the end of the suburbs, for burning houses were falling down on all sides, and I feared to be buried in the ruins. At last I got out of the town and reached the edge of the lake. The heat of the day, combined with that of the fire in the streets which I had passed through, had made me stream. I was half-suffocated and dropping with fatigue and hard work; for I had passed the night on horse-

back coming from Eylau to Friedland; then I had galloped again to Eylau and back, and had eaten nothing since the previous day. I did not therefore enjoy the prospect of having to cross on foot under a burning sun and through tall corn the immense plain which lay between me and Posthenen, where I had left Marshal Lannes; but fortune stood my friend. Grouchy's division of dragoons, which had been briskly engaged with the enemy close by, though victorious, had lost a certain number of men, and the colonels had as usual ordered the horses of the killed to be collected and led by a detachment at a distance from the rest. I caught sight of this picket, every man of which was leading four or five horses, as it was making for the lake to water them. I spoke to the officer, who, finding so many led horses in the way, was only too glad to let me take one, which I promised to send back to the regiment in the evening. He even selected for me an excellent animal which had been ridden by a sergeant killed in the charge. I mounted, and returned quickly towards Posthenen. Hardly had I left the shore of the lake, when it became the scene of a most bloody fight, owing to the desperate attack made by General Gortschakoff in order to effect his retreat by the Friedland road, of which Marshal Ney was in occupation.

Caught between that marshal's troops and those of our advancing centre, Gortschakoff's Russians made a stout defence in the houses near the lake. If, therefore, I had, as I at first intended, stayed to rest a few moments in that spot, I should have found myself in the thick of a terrible *mêlée*. I rejoined Lannes just as he was starting to attack Gortschakoff's force in rear, while Ney from the town was repulsing it in front, and I was therefore able to give him some useful information as to the configuration of the ground on which we were fighting. If the French army had made few prisoners on the battle-field of Friedland, it was not so on the morrow and the following days, for the Russians, driven at the sword's point in an utter rout, fell out from their ranks and slept, wearied out, in the fields, where we captured a great number. We also gathered up a good deal of artillery. All of Bennigsen's

army that could escape made haste to recross the Niemen, behind which the Emperor of Russia had remained. Remembering probably the dangers to which he had been exposed at Austerlitz, he had not thought it advisable to be present in person at the battle of Friedland, and lost no time, two days after our victory, in asking and obtaining an armistice.

Three days after the memorable battle of Friedland the French army came in sight of the town of Tilsit and the Niemen, which at this point is only a few leagues distant from the Russian frontier. After a battle it is all pain and grief in the rear of a victorious army, whose march is marked out by dead, dying, and wounded, while the surviving warriors, soon forgetting their fallen comrades, are rejoicing in their success and gaily marching on to new adventures. Great was the joy of our soldiers at seeing the Niemen, whose opposite bank was occupied by the remains of that Russian army which they had so often met and beaten. Our troops sang, while a gloomy silence reigned in the enemy's camp. The Emperor took up his quarters at Tilsit, while the troops encamped round the town. The Niemen lay between the two armies, the French being on the left bank, the Russians on the right. The Emperor Alexander requested an interview with Napoleon, and it took place on June 25 in a pavilion set up on a raft, which was anchored in mid-stream, in full view of the two armies. It was a most imposing spectacle. The two Emperors arrived from each side attended by five of the principal personages of their army. Marshal Lannes, who had flattered himself that he had this claim to accompany the Emperor, saw Marshal Bessières, Murat's intimate friend, preferred to him, and never forgave those marshals for what he considered an unfair piece of favour.

So Marshal Lannes stayed with us on the quay at Tilsit, whence we saw the two Emperors meet and embrace amid loud cheers from both camps. Next day at another interview in the same pavilion the Emperor of Russia presented to Napoleon his unfortunate friend, the King of Prussia. This prince, who through the chances of war had lost a vast kingdom, of which only the little town of Memel and a few poor

villages remained to him, preserved an attitude worthy of the descendant of the great Frederick. Napoleon received him politely but coldly, because he thought that he had reason to complain of him. Besides, he was planning the confiscation of a large part of his state.

In order to facilitate the intercourse of the two Emperors the town of Tilsit was declared neutral, and Napoleon ceded half of it to the Emperor of Russia, who took up his quarters there with his guard. The two sovereigns passed some twenty days together, during which they arranged the destiny of Europe. The King of Prussia meanwhile was relegated to the right bank, and was not even lodged in Tilsit, only coming there very rarely. One day Napoleon went to call on the unfortunate Queen of Prussia, who was said to be in great grief. He invited her to dinner on the following day, which she accepted, doubtless much against the grain. But at the moment of concluding peace, it was very necessary to appease the victor. Napoleon and the Queen of Prussia hated each other cordially. She had insulted him in many proclamations, and he had given it her back in his bulletins. Yet their interview showed no traces of their mutual hatred. Napoleon was respectful and attentive, the Queen gracious and disposed to captivate her former enemy. She had all the more need to do so, being well aware that the treaty of peace created under the title of Kingdom of Westphalia a new state, whose territory was to be contributed by electoral Hesse and Prussia.

The Queen could resign herself to the loss of several provinces, but she could not make up her mind to part with the strong place of Magdeburg, the retaining of which would be Prussia's safeguard. On his side, Napoleon, who proposed to make his brother Jerome King of Westphalia, wished to add Magdeburg to the new state. It is said that in order to retain this important town, the Queen of Prussia, during dinner, used all the methods of friendliness until Napoleon, to change the conversation, praised a superb rose that the Queen was wearing. The story goes that she said, 'Will your majesty have this rose in exchange for Magdeburg?' Perhaps it would have been chivalrous to accept, but the

Emperor was too practical a man to let himself be caught by a pretty offer, and it is averred that while praising the beauty of the rose and of the hand which offered it, he did not take the flower. The Queen's eyes filled with tears, but the victor affected not to perceive it. He kept Magdeburg and escorted the Queen politely to the boat which was to take her across to the other side.

During our stay at Tilsit, Napoleon reviewed his guard and his army in presence of Alexander, who was struck by the martial air and bearing of the troops. The Emperor of Russia showed in his turn some fine battalions of his guards, but the number of his troops of the line had been so reduced at Heilsberg and Friedland that he did not dare to display them. As for the King of Prussia, who only had some weak fragments of regiments remaining, he did not bring them out.

Napoleon concluded with Russia and Prussia a treaty of peace, in which the principal articles were, that a kingdom of Westphalia was created for the benefit of Jerome Bonaparte, and the Elector of Saxony, who had become the ally and friend of France, was raised to the rank of king, receiving in addition the grand duchy of Warsaw, consisting of a large province of the old Poland which was taken back from the Prussians. I omit the less important articles of the treaty, but its result was to restore peace between the Great Powers of the Continent.

In placing his brother Jerome on the throne of Westphalia, Napoleon added to the mistakes which he had already made when he gave the kingdom of Naples to Joseph and that of Holland to Louis. The people felt themselves humiliated by being compelled to obey strangers, who, so far from having done anything great themselves, were utter nullities, whose only merit was being Napoleon's brothers. The hatred and contempt which these new kings brought on themselves contributed very largely to the fall of the Emperor. The King of Westphalia was especially that one whose goings on made most enemies for Napoleon. Peace being concluded, the two Emperors parted with mutual assurances of attachment, which at that time appeared sincere.

CHAPTER XXXIII

THE French army was distributed through various provinces of Germany and Poland, under the command of five marshals. Lannes had asked to be excused from this duty, his health requiring that he should return to France. Thus, if I had been one of his regular aides-de-camp I should have had to return to Paris. All the more was I obliged to leave the front to rejoin Marshal Augereau, to whose staff I had not ceased to belong, my duty with Lannes being only temporary. So I made ready for my return to Paris. I sold two of my horses for what they would fetch, and sent Lisette to the accountant-general, M. de Launay, who, having taken a fancy for her, had begged me to entrust her to him until I required her again. I lent her to him for an indefinite time, and as she was now quieted by her wounds and her fatigues, he let his wife ride her and kept her until she died of old age seven or eight years later.

During the twenty days which the Emperor passed at Tilsit he had sent a great many officers both to Paris and to other parts of the Empire, so that the number available for this duty was almost exhausted. Not wishing to take officers from the regiments, Napoleon ordered that a list should be drawn up of all those who, having served as volunteers in the campaign, belonged to none of the army corps nor to the staffs of the five marshals who were to command them. My name was upon this list, and I felt sure that as I had already carried the Emperor's despatches he would employ me in preference to officers whom he did not know. Accordingly, on July 9, he sent for me, and giving me bulky portfolios and despatches for the King of Saxony, he ordered me to go to Dresden and await him there He

was to leave Tilsit that day, but was going on a round of visits to Königsberg, Marienwerder, and Silesia, so that I should have several days' start of him. I crossed Prussia afresh, revisited several of our battle-fields, reached Berlin, and got to Dresden two days before the Emperor. The Saxon court knew already that peace had been made and its elector raised to the rank of king, with the possession of the grand duchy of Warsaw, but I was the first to bring tidings of the approaching visit of the Emperor to Dresden on his way to Paris.

You may imagine the effect of this. The court, the town, the army were in a turmoil of preparation. A magnificent reception was due to the great Emperor, who, after having so generously set free the Saxon troops captured at Jena, was heaping benefits on their sovereign. I was most warmly received, I was lodged in the palace in delightful rooms and sumptuously attended. The king's aide-de-camp showed me everything noticeable in the palace and the town. When the Emperor arrived, according to the practice with which I was by this time familiar, I at once handed the portfolios to M. de Meneval, and asked for the Emperor's orders. These suited me admirably, for I was directed to take fresh portfolios to Paris, and the Emperor confided to me a letter which I was personally to hand to the Empress Josephine. Duroc let me have 8,000 francs for posting expenses from Tilsit to Dresden and from Dresden to Paris. I went off in high spirits. I had just been through three fine campaigns, in the course of which I had risen to the rank of captain and earned the Emperor's notice; we were about to enjoy the delights of peace, which would allow me to remain a long time with my mother, my health was quite restored, I had more money than I ever had in my life, everything invited me to be cheerful, and very cheerful I was.

So I came to Frankfort. A lieutenant-colonel of the imperial guard named M. de L—— was in command there. The Emperor had given me a letter for this officer containing, I think, a request for some private information, for M. de L—— was in close communication with M. Savary, the head

of the secret police. After having made me breakfast with him the colonel would see me back to my carriage, but as I got in I noticed a largish packet which formed no part of my despatches. I was about to ask my servant to explain this, when Colonel de L—— stopped me, saying in a whisper that the packet contained dresses of Berlin wool and other stuffs contraband in France, and that they were intended for the Empress Josephine, who would be very gratified to me for bringing them. I remembered too well my anxieties on the occasion of the report about the chasseurs of the guard, which I had been weak enough to make to the Emperor before the battle of Austerlitz, to be at all disposed to engage in another questionable business, so I refused very flatly. I should no doubt have been very glad to oblige the Empress, but I knew how inflexibly severe Napoleon was towards all smuggling, and having run so much danger and shed so much blood in fighting, I did not wish to lose the credit which I had thus obtained in the Emperor's eyes by transgressing his laws to obtain a smile of thanks from the Empress. To overcome my scruples Colonel de L—— pointed out that the parcel was in several wrappers and that the outside was addressed to the Minister of War, and bore the seal of the 7th Light Infantry with the inscription, 'Papers relating to the accounts.' He concluded that the customs authority would not venture to open the packet, and that I might take off the outside cover when I got to Paris, and take the goods to the Empress without being compromised. But in spite of all these fine arguments I flatly refused to undertake the job, and ordered the postillion to start. On reaching the stage halfway between Frankfort and Mainz, it occurred to me to scold my servant for having taken a parcel into my carriage, when he replied that during breakfast M. de L—— had himself placed the *parcels* there, and that, supposing they were some additional despatches, he had thought that he could not refuse to receive them from the governor of the place. 'Parcels!' I exclaimed; 'there are several, then? and he only took back one!' and when I turned over the Emperor's portfolios I did actually find a second bundle of

contraband, which the colonel without my knowledge had left among my baggage. This trick was too much for me, and I debated whether I should throw the dresses out in the road. I did not venture, however, and continued my journey, fully resolved if the smuggled goods were seized to declare how they had got into my carriage, and by whom the seal of the 7th Light Infantry had been put on the wrapper, for I wished to save myself from the Emperor's wrath. However, as this defence would have compromised the Empress, I thought I must only use it at the last extremity, and do all that depended on myself to prevent my carriage from being searched. Good luck and a little subterfuge got me out of the difficulty in the following way.

I was full of anxiety when I reached the bridge over the Rhine at Mainz, and my uneasiness was increased by seeing a large assembly of superior officials of the customs, officers and soldiers in full uniform, waiting at this advanced post. The sentry having, according to custom, stopped my carriage, two men appeared simultaneously at the two doors, namely, a *douanier* to make his search and an aide-de-camp of Marshal Kellermann, commanding at Mainz, to inquire if the Emperor would soon arrive. 'Excellent,' said I to myself, and pretending not to see the inquisitor of the customs, I replied to the aide-de-camp, 'The Emperor is behind me.' I was not telling an untruth: he was behind me, but at two days' distance, which I did not think it necessary to add.

All the bystanders overhearing my words were thrown into a great flutter, the aide-de-camp dashed off, crossed the bridge at a gallop at the risk of tumbling into the Rhine, and hastened to warn Marshal Kellermann. The guard stood to its arms, the *douaniers* and their officers sought to draw themselves up in the most military fashion possible, so as to make a proper appearance before the Emperor, and as my carriage was in their way, they told the postillion to drive on. Once out of the clutches of these gentry, I reached the post and ordered the horses to be promptly changed. But while this was being done a perfectly fearful storm burst over Mainz, rain falling in torrents. It was five o'clock in the

evening and just dinner time, but at the news of the Emperor's immediate arrival, the general assembly was beaten throughout the town. At this signal marshals, generals, prefect, mayor, civil and military authorities, throwing their napkins aside, bustled into their best clothes, and went off to their posts under a pelting rain, paddling through the overflowing gutters. Meanwhile I, the cause of this tremendous hullabaloo, was laughing like a lunatic as I went away at the best speed of three good post horses. But why did the Empress in disobedience to her husband want to wear dresses of contraband stuff? Why did a colonel slip contraband goods into my carriage when my back was turned? This seemed to excuse the trick which I had played. Besides, in the month of June the bath which I caused all the officials of Mainz to take could injure only their clothes! I could still hear the sound of the drums more than two leagues away from Mainz, and I learnt afterwards that the authorities had been on their legs all night, and that the Emperor had not come till two days later. However, as an accident had happened to his carriage the good people of Mainz could ascribe to that the delay which had ruined their best clothes.

I was going along quickly and gaily towards Paris, when a most disagreeable event interrupted my journey and changed my gaiety to grumbling. You know that when a sovereign is travelling it would be impossible to horse the numerous carriages which precede and follow his if their relays were not supplemented by horses brought for the occasion from posts on other roads. Now, as I was going out of Dombasle, a little town the other side of Verdun, a confounded emergency postillion, who having only come the night before, had not noticed a steep descent upon which one comes immediately after leaving the post-house, unable to check his horses when they were once on the hill, upset my carriage, and broke the springs and the body of it. As a finishing stroke it was Sunday, and all the population had gone off to a neighbouring village feast; so it was impossible to find a workman, and those whom I got the next day were

very clumsy: the end of it being that I had to pass two days in this wretched little place.

At last, just when I was starting again, an outrider came up announcing the Emperor's approach, and I took the liberty of stopping his carriage to let him know the accident which had befallen me. He laughed at it, took back the letter for the Empress, and went on. I followed him to Saint-Cloud, and having placed the portfolios in the hands of the private secretary, I went to my mother at Paris.

I resumed my duties of aide-de-camp to Marshal Augereau. It was easy work, for it consisted in passing a week or two out of every month at La Houssaye, where we led a very merry life. So passed the summer and autumn. During this time the Emperor's policy was leading up to new events and new tempests, which went near to engulf me in their terrible commotions, insignificant as I was, and thinking in my careless youth of nothing but enjoying life after having seen death so near.

CHAPTER XXXIV

It has been said with truth, that in 1807 the Emperor was at the height of his power. He had beaten the Austrians, the Prussians, and the Russians, and concluded a peace glorious for France and for himself. But hardly had Napoleon finished the war with the Northern Powers, when his evil genius led him to undertake one far more terrible in the extreme south of Europe.

The country of Portugal, being rich in natural products, and possessing no manufactories, had become a vast field for the commerce and industry of the English. They treated it almost like a colony, and profited by the wealth of the country without having the trouble of governing it. *De facto* if not *de jure* the country belonged to them. Napoleon had long awaited an opportunity for driving them out and ruining their commerce. After the Peace of Tilsit he thought the time was come. To complete the continental blockade he ordered Portugal to close her ports to the English. The execution of this measure was difficult, for the Portuguese nation only lived by changing its raw materials against English manufactured goods. You will see in the sequel of these Memoirs that I am far from approving Napoleon's policy throughout, but I am bound to say that from the political point of view this measure was excusable as putting a constraint on England to make her accept the general peace.

The Emperor then collected at Bayonne in September, 1807, an army of 25,000 men destined for the invasion of Portugal. But he committed two serious mistakes. The first was forming the expeditionary force of recently organised regiments; the second, giving the command of it to General Junot.

More than once Napoleon made an error in his choice of persons, because he followed his personal likings rather than the general opinion. In Junot the army saw a very brave man, but not a genuine commander. The first time that I saw him I was struck and disturbed by his haggard eyes. His end justified my apprehensions.[1] The foundation of his fortune is well known. As a mere quartermaster-sergeant in the Côte d'Or battalion he earned the regard of Captain Buonaparte of the artillery by a *bon-mot* in the trenches before Toulon. He followed him to Egypt, commanded in Paris, and became ambassador at Lisbon. His gaiety, his frank soldierly manner, his reputation for valour, his open-handedness, earned for him the friendship of great people and the affection of common people. His popularity in Portugal no doubt decided the Emperor to select him for the command of the Army of Occupation. It would, in fact, have been an advantage if Junot had shown more foresight as a general.

Spain was then in alliance with us, and was bound to supply our troops with food and lodging as they marched through. It was the commander-in-chief's duty to make sure that this promise was executed; but Junot merely entered Spain on October 17, and sent forward his columns along the roads where no preparations had been made to receive them. Our troops slept in the open air and got only half rations of food. Autumn was drawing to an end, the army was traversing the spurs of the Pyrenees, where the climate is severe, and very soon the road was covered with sick men and stragglers. The Spaniards, flocking from all sides to behold the conquerors of Marengo, Austerlitz, and Friedland, saw only wretched recruits hardly able to carry their knapsacks and their arms, and looking when assembled more like a hospital delivery than like an army marching to conquer a kingdom. This sorry spectacle gave the Spaniards a very poor impression of our troops, and produced disastrous results in the following year.

[1] Thinking himself unfairly treated by Napoleon, he committed suicide by leaping from a window in July 1813.

Napoleon underrated the nations of the Peninsula, and thought that he need only show French troops to obtain what he would from them, making therein a great mistake. It must also be said that not having been apprised of the difficulties in the way of their march, the Emperor kept repeating his order to advance promptly. Junot carried out the instructions badly, and his army of boy soldiers soon found itself scattered in little detachments over more than 200 leagues of road between Bayonne and Salamanca. Luckily, the Spaniards were not yet at war with France—nevertheless, to keep their hand in, they assassinated some fifty of our men.

On reaching Ciudad Rodrigo, Junot caused his leading columns to halt for several days; he had left behind more than 15,000 men. As soon as a third of them had rejoined he crossed the mountains of Penha Parda, which separated him from the valley of the Tagus, taking with him only a half ration of bread per man. These mountains, which I have crossed, are uncultivated and inhabited by a poor and barbarous population. The troops passed them with all manner of difficulties and at the cost of extreme fatigue, which compelled them to seize some flocks belonging to the inhabitants, who revenged themselves by assassinating some hundred French travellers. The army at length reached the town of Alcantara, and entered Portugal by the town of Castello Branco. It was only with much effort and after suffering every kind of hardship that they reached Abrantes with five or six thousand men, tired out and mostly barefooted. At Abrantes begins the beautiful part of the Tagus valley. The stragglers and the sick who were still among the mountains, hearing of the comfort which awaited them at Abrantes, made haste to come up, and the army gradually came together.

A general of any foresight would have given it full time to re-assemble, but Junot, under the pretext that the Emperor had ordered him to seize all goods belonging to the English, and that he must reach Lisbon quickly to prevent them from carrying them off, got together 4,000 of the least-fatigued men, and with this feeble column marched upon the capital,

leaving to his generals the task of getting the rest of his army together and coming to join him. This daring attempt might have caused the loss of his army, for Lisbon contained a garrison of 12,000 to 15,000 men, and an English fleet was stationed at the mouth of the Tagus. Less than this would have been enough to repulse Junot and his 4,000 men; but so great was the magical effect produced by Napoleon's victories, that the Portuguese Government, acceding to all the Emperor's demands, hastened to declare war against England in the hope of staying Junot's march, but the advanced guard of the French general proceeded onwards and threw the capital into utter confusion. The Regent, not knowing at first what steps to take, ended by deciding to transfer the seat of government to Brazil. The insane Queen, the Regent, the Royal Family, the nobles, nine or ten thousand persons in all, embarking on board a great fleet, and taking immense treasure with them, sailed for Brazil on November 28.

On the same day Junot attacked Santarem, but his small column having had to cross the plain of Golegan through two feet of water, so large a number of the troops were seized with fever that on the morrow not more than 1,500 men were fit to go on. Junot continued his march none the less with this weak force, and boldly made his entry into Lisbon. I must do Junot the justice to admit that, when he had once got his troops together, he provided sedulously for their needs, so that in the course of December he had an effective army of 23,000 men in fairly good condition. Finding the Portuguese troops an embarrassment, Junot gave leave to the native soldiers who wished to remain at home, and formed the others into a division, which he sent to France. It did good service, and went on the Russian campaign.

[At this point we must give a glance at the state of affairs in Spain. For more than ten years past the country had practically been governed by Manuel Godoy, an adventurer, who, having come to Madrid as a soldier of the body-guard, had brought himself into notice by his guitar-playing. In this way he became known to the Queen, a woman of capacity and ambition, to whom Charles IV., a nonentity, entrusted

the government. Godoy became her favourite, and presently chief minister. In this capacity he negotiated a treaty with France in 1795, so honourable to Spain that the King conferred on him the title of Prince of the Peace, and the Queen arranged a marriage between him and a princess of the blood royal. A difference with Napoleon, caused by an imprudent proclamation which Godoy had put out after Jena, had been made up by the despatch of an army corps into Germany, and the promise of aid to Junot in Portugal.

Meantime Godoy had treated Ferdinand, Prince of the Asturias, with increasing insolence, which was resented by the people at large, by whom Ferdinand was beloved. The rough copy of a letter written by the Prince to Napoleon, about the end of 1807, at a time when the King was seriously ill, proposing a marriage with a member of the Buonaparte family, fell into the King's hands, and completed the rupture between father and son. Ferdinand and his advisers were arrested on a charge of plotting against the King's life, though it appears far more probable that his own was in danger. The King of Spain communicated the matter to the other European sovereigns, including Napoleon.

It has been said, unhappily with reason, that Napoleon's ambition was his ruin. But his ambition has been for the most part misunderstood. It had reference to France. He wished to see her in his lifetime so great and so powerful that, when he was gone, she might not fear attack. To this end, first the power of England was to be broken; secondly, no state was to exist in Central and Southern Europe whose interests were not identical with those of France, whom they were to regard as their stay and whom they in turn were to support. This gigantic scheme would have demanded two reigns and two sovereigns equal to Napoleon. Over-haste ruined him, and his success at the outset blinded him. He expected to meet with no more resistance from Spain than from Holland, Westphalia, Naples, or the easily conquered Portugal.

Not knowing the hatred of Spaniards for the foreigner, he thought that the distracted kingdom would fling itself into

his arms. But his conduct was of a kind to destroy the illusions even of those Spaniards, and there were such, who saw in him the regenerator of their country. Under the plea of defending the coasts against an attack from England, he poured troops into Spain. It was then thought that he meant to support the Prince of the Asturias, a course which would have been popular in the country ; and Godoy decided to play the part of mediator between father and son. Meanwhile, however, came rumours from his agent at Paris that Napoleon's real purpose was to drive out both. The Queen and the Royal Family wished to follow those of Portugal to America. This would have served Napoleon's purpose well, but the King refused to go, and renewed the proposal for a matrimonial alliance. Napoleon's evil genius, however, persuaded him only to send forward more troops.]

CHAPTER XXXV

ALL this time I was living quietly with my mother at Paris, where I passed part of the winter, and took part in the numerous entertainments which were given, the finest being the reception given by the city to the imperial guard on their return. Thus ended the year 1807, in which I had incurred so many dangers and led so chequered a life. I little thought that in the course of the year which was now beginning I should again be face to face with death.

In the course of January, Napoleon at length replied to the King of Spain, but in an evasive fashion, for, without positively refusing to give the hand of one of his nieces to the Prince of the Asturias, he put off the date of the marriage indefinitely. The alarm of the court of Madrid at the receipt of this answer was increased by hearing that more French troops were on the march towards Catalonia and Aragon, which, with the army in Portugal, would raise the Emperor's forces in the Peninsula to 125,000 men. Finally, Napoleon in great part lifted the veil under which his plans had been hidden. Under the pretext of sending troops on board the French fleet stationed at Cadiz, he caused a powerful army corps to advance in February towards Madrid, through which the road from Bayonne to Cadiz passes, and named Prince Murat generalissimo of all the French forces in Spain.

I had now been in Paris more than six months, and although Marshal Augereau, to whom I was still aide-de-camp, was far from anticipating the war which was about to break out in the Peninsula, he thought it neither right nor conducive to my advance in my profession that I should stay at Paris when a large army was assembled beyond the Pyrenees. Being himself still kept in France by the effects


SPAIN
AND
PORTUGAL
To illustrate the Peninsular War
English Miles
10 30 20 40 50 100
Longitude West
Longitude East of Greenwich
FRANCE
ASTURIAS
GALICIA
TRAS OS MONTES
LEON
NAVARRE
ARAGON
CATALONIA
BARCELONA
Oporto
Salamanca
Burgos
Logrono
Saragossa
Tarragona
Gerona
MADRID
NEW CASTILE
ESTREMADURA
CASTILE
LA MANCHA
VALENCIA
MURCIA
ANDALUSIA
ALGARVES
Cadiz
Malaga
Gibraltar
Strait of Gibraltar
Seville
Cordova
Carthagena
Alicante
Minorca
Majorca
Palma
Iviza
Formentera
BALEARIC ISLES
Toulouse
Tarbes
Pamplona
Bilbao
Santander
Oviedo
Lugo
Coruna
Vigo
Zamora
Toro
Valladolid
Aranda
Soria
Burgos
Palencia
Leon
Astorga
Almeida
Ciudad Rodrigo
Placentia
Talavera
Toledo
Aranjuez
Madrid
Guadalajara
Alcantara
Badajoz
Elvas
Olivenza
Campo Mayor
Merida
Villa Franca
Ciudad Real
Sierra Morena
Sierra de Guadarrama
Sierra Nevada
Tarifa
Ceuta
AFRICA
Lisbon
Setuval
Evora
Portalegre
Abrantes
Coimbra
Aveiro
Braga
Viana
Miranda
Bragança
Chaves
Amarante
Vizeu
Guarda
Castello Branco
Thomar
Leiria
Santarem
Alcantara
Almaraz
Arzobispo
Puente del Arzobispo
Escalona
Illescas
Aranjuez
Ocaña
Tembleque
Consuegra
Alcazar
Manzanares
Daimiel
Almagro
Valdepenas
Alcudia
Murviedro
Xativa
Alcoy
Denia
Alicante
Elche
Orihuela
Lorca
Murcia
Cartagena
Almeria
Motril
Granada
Antequera
Ronda
Xeres
Cadiz
Gibraltar
Tarifa
Algeziras
Tarragona
Reus
Tortosa
Lerida
Balaguer
Cervera
Manresa
Vich
Gerona
Figueras
Barcelona
Mataro
Tarragona
Tudela
Pamplona
Tolosa
Vitoria
Bilbao
Bilboa
Bayonne
St. Sebastian
Irun
Oleron
Pau
Tarbes
Toulouse
Mountains
Pyrenees
Mountains
Cantabrian
Mountains
Mountains
Mountains

of his wound, he took me to Prince Murat to ask him to attach me provisionally to his staff. I have already said that my father, who belonged to the same part of the country as Murat, had done him many kindnesses. Murat, who had always shown himself grateful, consented very readily to take me until such time as Augereau should have a command. I was well satisfied with this decision, although the position of a supernumerary officer has its inconveniences, but I was anxious to show zeal, I reckoned on the Emperor's goodwill and, further, I was glad to go back to Spain and witness the great events which were in progress there. Considerable expense was necessary to make a fitting appearance on the staff of Murat, which at that time was the most brilliant in the army, but this was made easy to me by what was left of my splendid travelling allowances during and after the Friedland campaign. So I bought three good horses, with which my servant, Woirland, was to await me at Bayonne, whither I went when I had got my new uniforms.

This was the third time that a change of employment had taken me to Bayonne. Prince Murat and his staff received me most kindly, and I was soon on the best of terms with them all, though I steadily refused, in spite of continual pressure, to take part in their play. These gentlemen had cards or dice in their hands all day, winning or losing thousands of francs with most perfect calm; but besides that I have always detested play, I knew that I must keep what I had in order to renew my outfit in case of accidents, and that it was dishonourable to risk what I perhaps could not pay.

Part of the troops which Murat was to command were, perhaps, already in Castile. He entered Spain on March 10, and in five days we were at Burgos. From this time Murat regulated his march on that of the columns, and passed in succession to Valladolid in Segovia. The Spaniards, always flattering themselves that the French had come to protect the Prince of the Asturias, received our troops very well, though again astonished by their extreme youth and want of robustness, for under some incomprehensible delusion, Napoleon

had persisted in sending into the Peninsula none but newly-raised regiments.

We occupied in Spain none but open towns, and two fortified places only, Barcelona and Pampeluna. But as their citadels and forts were still in the hands of the Spanish troops, the Emperor ordered his generals to try to get possession of them. To this end a thoroughly base trick was employed. The Spanish Government, while forbidding its generals to let us occupy the citadels and the forts, had ordered that the French troops should be received as friends, and everything done for their comfort. The commanders of our regiments asked permission to place their sick and their stores in the citadels, which was granted. Then they disguised their grenadiers as sick, and hid arms in the provision sacks of several companies, who, under pretext of going to the store houses for bread, made their way into the place and disarmed the Spaniards. In this way, General Duhesme, with only 5,000 men, got possession of the citadel of Barcelona and of Fort Monjuich. The citadel of Pampeluna and nearly all those in Catalonia shared the same fate.

[The Queen and the Prince of the Peace were at Aranjuez, persisting in their intention of retiring to America if matters got worse. Ferdinand, however, still hoping to obtain the hand of Napoleon's niece, saw in us only liberators, and with the support of many of the Royal Family and of the ministers, refused to follow the Queen and Godoy. At the sight of the preparations for a journey, the population and garrison of Aranjuez understood the facts, and their indignation spread to Madrid. Nevertheless, the King was on the point of starting on the morning of March 16. But the people, with the support of the troops, rose and opposed his departure. Charles submitted, and a proclamation stating that he would not go, quieted the crowd. But in the course of the night their numbers were swelled by the garrison and part of the population of Madrid, as well as peasants from the neighbourhood. Godoy's house was broken into and sacked, his guard of hussars dispersed by the King's body-guard, and the

crowd went in search of the favourite himself. In order to save his life, the ministers persuaded the King to sign a decree degrading the Prince of the Peace from all his titles and dignities. At the news the crowd broke out into wild rejoicings, in which Ferdinand had the bad taste to take part.

All this time Godoy was actually concealed in his own palace, rolled up in some matting in a loft. The place had been searched, but he had not been discovered. He passed forty-eight hours in this position, and only came out when constrained by hunger. Then, however, he was promptly arrested by a sentry and handed over to the populace. He had received several wounds, when a picket of the body-guard, less cruel than the majority of their comrades, tore him from the hands of his tormenters, and got him away into the very same barrack where, twenty years before, he had been himself admitted as a soldier in the body-guard.]

On learning the arrest of their favourite, the King and Queen, in fear for his life, appealed to the generosity of the Prince of the Asturias and implored him to use his influence to release Godoy from the hands of the insurgents. Ferdinand arrived at the barracks just at the moment when the crowd was breaking in the gates. On his promise that Godoy should be brought to trial the mob retired respectfully. The prisoner was courageously awaiting his death when he saw the heir to the throne enter the stable where he was lying in his blood. At the sight of his personal foe he recovered all his energy, and when Ferdinand said to him with a generosity whether genuine or feigned, 'I pardon you,' Godoy replied with true Castilian pride, made all the more notable by his unhappy condition, 'The King alone has the right to pardon, and you are not king yet.' It is alleged, though the fact has not been proved, that Ferdinand answered, 'It will not be long first.' However that may be, half an hour later the crown was on the head of the Prince of the Asturias.

[On Ferdinand's return to the palace, the King and Queen, seeing no better way of calming the populace, abdicated in favour of their son. Instantly a frenzy of joy spread from

Aranjuez to Madrid and throughout Spain, no man thinking that the approach of the French might disturb their happiness. At that moment Napoleon's troops were descending from the heights of Somo Sierra and of the Guadarrama. One column was at Buitrago and the other near the Escurial; Murat, with 30,000 men, was within a day's march of Madrid. Meanwhile Ferdinand VII., as he may now be called, was not without anxiety. He again sent to the Emperor asking for the hand of his niece, and despatched the Duke of Parqué to explain the state of affairs to Murat. Then he organised his ministry and recalled his friends, including the canon Escoiquiz.] It was on March 19, just as Murat's staff was traversing the Guadarrama Mountains, that we received the first news of the rising at Aranjuez. The next day we heard of Charles's abdication and Ferdinand's accession. Murat hastened forward, and on the 21st his head-quarters were established at the town of El Molar, a few leagues from Madrid. A fearful tumult was raging in the capital. In its ferocious joy the populace had burnt and pillaged the houses of the Prince of the Peace, his family, and his friends; they would even have been massacred but for the energetic action of Count Beauharnais, who offered them at the French embassy an asylum which no one dared violate.

On learning of the revolution, Prince Murat, usually so communicative, became gloomy and preoccupied, and passed several days without speaking to any of us. Doubtless, in his place, amid a country turned upside down, any other marshal would have found his task very difficult; but Murat's personal position made it still more complicated. Seeing three of the Emperor's brothers already provided with crowns, while the fourth, Lucien, had declined one, Murat might well flatter himself that Napoleon's intention was to give him the throne of Spain if the Royal Family deserted their country and fled to America. He regretted, therefore, much th. accession of Ferdinand, whom the Spanish nation adored and to whom it would rally. Therefore Murat, grounding his action on the fact that he had no orders from the Emperor to recognise Ferdinand VII. continued in his letters to give him the title

of Prince of the Asturias, and advised Charles IV. to repudiate an abdication which had been extorted from him by revolt and threats.

The old King and the Queen, regretting their loss of power, wrote bitter complaints to Napoleon of their son, representing his conduct at Aranjuez, not wholly without foundation, as a sort of parricide. On the 23rd Murat entered Madrid at the head of Marshal Moncey's corps. The new king had called upon the people to give a good reception to his *friend* Napoleon's troops. He was punctually obeyed; we saw nothing but friendly faces among the vast and curious crowd. But it was easy to perceive how astonished they were at the sight of our young infantry soldiers. The moral effect was wholly to our disadvantage, and as I compared the broad chests and powerful limbs of the Spaniards who surrounded us with those of our weak and weedy privates, my national pride was humbled. Though I did not foresee the disasters which would arise from the poor opinion of our troops on the part of the Spaniards, I was sorry that the Emperor had not sent into the Peninsula some veteran regiments from the Army of Germany. Still our cavalry, and especially our cuirassiers, an arm unfamiliar to the modern Spaniards, excited their admiration, and the same with the artillery. But a shout of enthusiasm went up when the imperial guard appeared. The sight of the Mamelukes astonished the Spaniards, who could not conceive how the *Christian* French should have admitted *Turks* into their ranks. Ever since the Moorish domination, the peoples of the Peninsula have loathed the Mussulmans, though much afraid of having to fight against them. Four Mamelukes would put twenty Castilians to flight, as was proved before very long.

Murat established himself in a palace belonging to the Prince of the Peace, the only one which the mob had spared, under the impression that it still belonged to the Crown. I was lodged hard by with a much respected member of the Council of the Indies. Hardly had I alighted when Prince Murat, hearing that Godoy's enemies were sending him to

prison at Madrid, no doubt to have him murdered there, and that the poor wretch was already at the gate of the town, ordered me to set out with a squadron of dragoons, and prevent at any cost the entry of the Prince of the Peace into the capital, letting the officers of his escort know that he, Murat, would hold them responsible for their prisoner's life. Two leagues from the suburbs I came upon Godoy. Although the unhappy man was terribly wounded and covered with blood, the guards who escorted him had been cruel enough to put irons on his hands and feet, and to tie him on a rough open cart where he was exposed to the scorching rays of the sun, and to thousands of flies attracted by his wounds, which were scarcely covered with coarse linen rags. I was indignant at the sight, and glad to see that it produced the same effect on the French squadron which accompanied me.

The guards escorting the Prince of the Peace, about one hundred in number, were supported by half a battalion of infantry. I explained my object politely to the commanding officer, but he replied with extreme arrogance that he did not take his orders from the commander of the French army. Adopting the same tone, I said that my business being to execute those orders, I should use every means to prevent the prisoner from being taken any farther. My dragoons were not recruits, but stalwart veterans of Austerlitz; determination could be read in their faces. I placed them in line so as to bar the passage of the cart, and told the officer of the guard that I waited for him to fire the first shot, but that I should then at once charge with my squadron upon him and his men. The officers of my dragoons had already given the order to draw swords, and the ardour of our adversaries appeared to be cooling a little when the commander of the half battalion in the rear came to the head of the column to see what the disturbance was about, and I recognised in him Don Miguel Rafael Cœli, the jolly officer with whom I had travelled from Nantes to Salamanca in 1802.[1] Being a sensible man he understood Murat's reasons for objecting to the Prince of the Peace being brought into Madrid. If he

[1] See p. 97.

were murdered, as was pretty certain, the French army would incur obloquy for not preventing it, while if it interfered it would provoke a bloody collision. As second in command Don Rafael had the right to give his opinion. He spoke to the officer commanding in the same sense that I had done, and it was agreed that Godoy should be detained for the time in the village of Pinto. The poor wretch had been a silent witness of what took place, and on reaching his prison he expressed his thanks to me in very good French, begging me to convey his gratitude to Prince Murat.

I took the liberty of pointing out to the guards the cruelty and disgrace to the Spanish uniform in putting irons on a prisoner who was guarded by 4,000 men. Don Rafael supported me, and we succeeded in getting the prince set free from his iron collar, handcuffs, and fetters. He was only held by a chain attached to his body, so that, though not free in prison, he could move a little and lie down on a mattress, which I made them give him. His wounds, received five days ago, had not yet been dressed; the surgeon of our dragoons attended him, and the officers and even the troopers lent him linen.

Though I could reckon on the honesty of the infantry commander, I had little confidence with regard to the treatment which the Prince of the Peace would receive when I had left him in the hands of his cruel enemies, the guard. I took it on myself, therefore, to quarter the French squadron in the village, and arrange with the captain that a sentry should always be placed inside the prison to keep an eye on the one posted there by the guards. Murat approved what I had done, and for further security sent a battalion to take up its quarters at Pinto with orders to keep a sharp look out on the guards. Finally, Ferdinand VII., passing through the place next day on his way to Madrid, received from the officer of the guards a report of what had happened. Dreading above all things any complications with the French, the new king and his ministers commended him for having avoided a conflict with the dragoons, and ordered Godoy to be left in the prison at Pinto. Some days later they had him moved to the old

fortress of Villa Viciosa, at a greater distance from the capital.

On March 24 Ferdinand made his royal entry into Madrid, being received by the people with indescribable joy. An immense crowd greeted him with cheers, women threw flowers in his path, and men spread their cloaks under his horses' feet. Our troops did not appear officially. Murat did not even visit Ferdinand, not knowing, until the Emperor had decided, whether the father or the son was to be recognised as sovereign of the Spains. If Napoleon intended to seize the crown, he would probably prefer to see it restored for the moment to the feeble Charles, rather than have the more difficult task of taking it from the nation's favourite, Ferdinand. Murat, therefore, felt pretty sure that the Emperor would refuse to recognise the new king.

Ferdinand, meanwhile, uneasy as to the view which Napoleon might take of his accession, consulted M. de Beauharnais; who, too upright a man himself to think it possible that Napoleon could take any steps against the liberty of a prince coming to seek him in the character of arbiter, advised Ferdinand to meet the Emperor at Bayonne. The King's friends doubted; but General Savary unexpectedly appeared with a letter from Napoleon, which determined him to take the course suggested. Moreover, he learnt that his father and mother were on their way to lay their version of the case before the Emperor, and it seemed well to anticipate them. The advice given by M. de Beauharnais had in fact been prompted by Murat and Savary. The Emperor had started for Bayonne on April 2, travelling slowly, in order to leave time for events to mature. [Ferdinand sent his brother Charles on in advance, and himself left Madrid on April 10, on the faith of Savary's assurances that Napoleon was already at Bayonne. Accompanied by that general, he reached Burgos, where he did not, as he had been led to expect, find Napoleon; but did find the roads covered with French columns on the march. His suspicions that some trap was being prepared for him were calmed by Savary's assurances that Napoleon was at Vittoria. On arriving at that town, Fer-

dinand learnt with some surprise that, so far from having crossed the frontier, the Emperor had not yet arrived at Bayonne. This was more than his Spanish pride could endure; his counsellors pointed out that he had gone as far to meet a foreign sovereign as was consistent with his dignity, and in spite of all that Savary could say, he decided to go no farther. Furious at seeing his prey on the point of escaping him, the general posted off to Bayonne, and found that the Emperor had arrived on the 14th.

By the next day Ferdinand was practically a prisoner. Marshal Bessières had been secretly ordered to arrest him if he attempted to return, and Savary was coming to see that the order was executed. But no step of this kind was necessary, for Ferdinand, hearing that his parents, at the instance of his sister the ex-Queen of Etruria, were already on their way from Madrid to Bayonne, in fear of letting them get the ear of the Emperor before him, insisted on setting out at once, undeterred by the protests of the people and the forebodings of older advisers. On April 20 he crossed the Bidassoa. Not an infantry picket was there to present arms to him, nor a trooper to escort him. When at length some officers of the Emperor's household met him, they accosted him as Prince of the Asturias. It was too late to go back; Ferdinand was in France and in Napoleon's power.

The Emperor, who was occupying the château of Marac, where I had been lodged in 1803 with Augereau, called upon Ferdinand, treated him politely, and invited him to dinner, but never gave him the title of king. On the next day he threw off the mask and announced to Ferdinand and his ministers that having been charged by Providence to create a great empire and lower the power of England, and having learnt by experience that he could not count on the assistance of Spain so long as the Bourbon family governed it, he had determined to restore the crown neither to Ferdinand nor to Charles, but to place it on the head of a member of his own family. Ferdinand and his advisers, overwhelmed by this statement, refused at first to accept it, answering with

some reason that in any case no member of the French imperial family had any right to the crown of Spain.

Meanwhile the old King and Queen were approaching Bayonne, which they reached on April 20. Napoleon received them with royal honours, and brought them to dine with him at the château of Marac. There they found their beloved Manuel Godoy, whom they had not seen since the outbreak of Aranjuez. Before leaving Madrid, however, they had had an interview with Murat, and implored his intervention on behalf of the Prince of the Peace. The Emperor also had instructed him that Godoy's life was to be saved at all costs. To Murat's overtures, the provisional Junta, under the presidency of Prince Anthony, Ferdinand's uncle, replied that they had not the power to release so important a prisoner. Murat thereupon surrounded the castle of Villa Viciosa with a French brigade, ordering the general to bring away the Prince of the Peace amicably or otherwise. His guards, with the assent of the commandant, the Marquis of Chasteler, a Belgian in the Spanish service, having declared that they would stab him rather than give him up alive, Murat let them know that if they carried their purpose into effect they should be shot without mercy over his corpse. Thereupon the Junta ordered his release. The poor wretch arrived in our camp in a pitiable state; Murat received him kindly, provided for his wants, and sent him off at once with an escort of cavalry to Bayonne. Happening to recognise me as one of those who had saved him at Pinto, he expressed his desire that I should be of his escort. I should have liked it very well, but as I have already said the supernumerary aides-de-camp only get the disagreeable duties. This task was therefore entrusted to one of the regular staff, while I before long had one of extreme danger.

During the interview between Godoy and the elder sovereigns, Ferdinand came to pay his respects to his father. Charles received him with contumely, and had he not been in the Emperor's palace, would have driven him from his presence. On the following day, yielding to the persuasions of the Queen and the Prince of the Peace, who argued that as

he would no longer be able to reign over Spain he would do better to accept the position which the Emperor offered him in France, and thus secure at once repose for his declining years and vengeance upon Ferdinand, Charles offered no more resistance to Napoleon's plans.]

While great events were maturing at Bayonne, Prince Murat, who had provisionally the control of the Government at Madrid, had caused Charles' protest to be published, and Ferdinand's name to be suppressed on all public documents, much to the discontent of the people and the grandees. When the news from Bayonne arrived, brought by secret emissaries in the disguise of peasants, whom Ferdinand's friends had sent, their agitation increased. The storm was grumbling around us, nor was it long before it broke out at Madrid.

CHAPTER XXXVI

CHARLES IV., the Queen, Ferdinand, and his brother, Prince Charles, being all at Bayonne, the only members of the Royal Family remaining in Spain were the ex-Queen of Etruria and her son, the old Prince Anthony, and Charles IV.'s youngest son, Prince Francis,[1] who was then only twelve or thirteen years old. Murat, having received orders to send these members of the House of Bourbon to Bayonne, the Queen of Etruria and Prince Anthony expressed themselves willing to leave Spain, but the young Prince Francis was still a ward of the Junta, and that body, in alarm at seeing all the princes of the royal family carried off one by one, definitely opposed the child's departure. Then public excitement became very great, and in the course of May 1 numerous groups assembled in the principal streets of Madrid, and especially in the large square known as the Puerta del Sol. These were dispersed by some of our cavalry, but on the following day, just as the princes were getting into their carriage, some servants came out of the palace exclaiming that Don Francis was crying bitterly and clinging to the furniture, declaring that he had been born in Spain and would not leave it. It is easy to understand the effect which such generous sentiments, expressed by a child of the royal house, who, in the absence of his two brothers, was the hope of the nation, would produce upon the mind of a proud and free people. In an instant the mob armed itself, and massacred every Frenchman who was caught by himself in the town. Most of our troops being camped outside, it was necessary to warn them, and this it was not easy to do.

[1] Francisco de Paula, afterwards father of Francisco d'Assis, sometime king-consort of Spain.

On hearing the first shots I wished to go to my post near the marshal, whose hotel was close to my lodging. I leapt on my horse, and was going out, when my host, the venerable member of the Indian Council, stopped me, pointing out that the street was occupied by some thirty armed insurgents, whom it was clear that I could not escape. I remarked to the excellent man that my honour required me to brave all dangers in order to get to my general. He advised me to go out on foot, and leading me to the end of the garden, opened a little gate, and very kindly himself led me by back lanes to the rear of Prince Murat's house, where I found a French sentry. This much respected gentleman, to whom in all probability I owed my life, was, as I shall never forget, called Don Antonio Hernandez.

At head-quarters I found great excitement, for although Murat had with him only two battalions and some squadrons, he was preparing to march resolutely to face the tumult. Everybody but myself was on horseback; I was in despair. Presently, however, General Belliard, chief of the staff, having given orders that some pickets of grenadiers should be sent to drive back the enemy's sharpshooters, who already were occupying the approaches to the palace, I offered to guide one of them through the street in which the house of Don Hernandez stood, and as soon as the gate was cleared I got my horse and joined Prince Murat.

No military duty is more dangerous than that of a staff officer in a country, still more in a city, which is in a state of insurrection. Having to go almost always alone through the midst of the enemy when carrying orders to the troops, he is exposed to the risk of assassination without the power of defending himself. Hardly was Murat out of his palace when he sent off officers to all the officers round Madrid with orders to bring the troops in by all the gates at once. The cavalry of the imperial guard and a division of dragoons were quartered at Buen Retiro. This was one of the nearest camps to head-quarters, but one of the most dangerous to reach, since in order to get there it was necessary to go through the two largest streets of the town, those of Alcalà and San

Gronimo, where nearly every window was lined with Spanish sharpshooters. I need not say that, as this was the most difficult mission, the commander-in-chief did not assign it to one of his regular aides-de-camp. It was on me that it devolved, and I started at a smart trot over a pavement which the sun had made very slippery.

I had hardly gone two hundred yards from the staff when I was received by numerous musket-shots, but as the tumult was but just beginning, the fire was endurable, all the more so since the men at the windows were shopkeepers and workmen, without much practice in handling muskets. Still, the horse of one of my dragoons was knocked over by a bullet, and the people came out of the houses to slaughter the poor soldier; but his comrades and I laid about us with our sabres, and when we had stretched a dozen of the rioters on the ground the rest took to their heels. Then the dragoon, taking the hand of one of his comrades, was able to run with us till we reached the outposts of our cavalry camp.

While defending the dismounted dragoon, I had received a blow from a dagger in my jacket sleeve, and two of my troopers had been slightly wounded. My orders were to bring the divisions to the Puerta del Sol, and they started at a gallop. The squadrons of the guard, commanded by the celebrated Daumesmil, marched first, with the Mamelukes leading. The riot had had time to increase; we were fired upon from nearly all the houses, especially the palace of the Duke of Hijar, where every window was lined with good shots. We lost there several men, among others the terrible Mustapha, that Mameluke who went near to catching the Grand Duke Constantine at Austerlitz. His comrades swore to avenge him, but for the moment it was impossible to halt, and the cavalry rode on rapidly under a hail of bullets. In the Puerta del Sol we found Murat engaged with a huge compact crowd of armed men, among whom could be seen some thousands of Spanish soldiers, who had brought guns, and were firing on the French with grape. On seeing the dreaded Mamelukes arrive, the Spaniards made some attempt at resistance, but the sight of the *Turks* alarmed the bravest

of them too much for their resolution to last long. The Mamelukes, dashing scimitar in hand into the dense mass, sent a hundred heads flying in a trice, and opened a way for the chasseurs and dragoons, who set to furiously with their sabres. The Spaniards, rolled back from the square, tried to escape by the many wide streets which meet there from all parts of the town, but they were stopped by other French columns whom Murat had bidden to rendezvous at that point. There were also partial combats in other quarters, but this was the most important, and decided the victory in our favour. The insurgents had 1,200 or 1,500 men killed and many wounded, and their loss would have been much greater if Murat had not given the order to cease firing.

As a soldier I was bound to fight any who attacked the French army, but I could not help recognising in my inmost conscience that our cause was a bad one, and that the Spaniards were quite right in trying to drive out strangers, who, after coming among them in the guise of friends, were wishing to dethrone their sovereign and take forcible possession of the kingdom. This war, therefore, seemed to me wicked, but I was a soldier, and I must march or be charged with cowardice. The greater part of the army thought as I did, and like me, obeyed orders all the same.

Hostilities had now ceased almost everywhere; the town was occupied by our infantry, and the cavalry received orders to return to camp. The insurgents who had fired so briskly from the Duke of Hijar's palace on the imperial guard when they first came by, had had the imprudent boldness to remain at their post, and recommence their fire as our squadrons returned. These, however, indignant at the sight of their comrades' bodies, which the inhabitants had barbarously cut to pieces, dismounted a number of troopers, who, climbing into the windows of the ground floor, penetrated into the palace, and hastened to take terrible revenge. The Mamelukes, who had suffered the heaviest loss, entered the rooms, scimitar and blunderbus in hand, and pitilessly massacred every

insurgent that they met, the greater part being the Duke's servants. Not one escaped, and their corpses, thrown over the balconies, mingled their blood with that of the Mamelukes whom they had slaughtered in the morning.

Thus the fight was ended and victory assured. Murat had now to attend to two important matters: to report to the Emperor what had happened at Madrid, and to secure the departure of the Queen of Etruria, the old Prince Anthony, and above all the young Don Francis. The child, frightened by the sound of the firing, now agreed to go with his sister and his uncle, but this party could only travel by short stages, while it was important that Murat's despatches should reach the Emperor by the first possible moment You will guess what happened. So long as Spain had been tranquil, the Prince had entrusted his frequent reports to members of his regular staff; but now that it was a question of crossing a great part of the kingdom in the midst of a population who, at the news of the fighting at Madrid would be ready to murder French officers, it became a job for a supernumerary aide-de-camp. As I quite expected, although according to the roster for duty it was not my turn to go, this dangerous mission was entrusted to me, and I accepted it without remark.

Murat, who quite misjudged the Castilian character, imagined that they would be frightened by the suppression of the revolt at Madrid, and would make a complete submission without venturing to take up arms. As he flattered himself that Napoleon destined him for the throne of Charles IV. he was beaming, and, as he handed me the despatches, said more than once: 'You may repeat to the Emperor what I say in this letter; my victory over the insurgents in the capital assures *us* the peaceable possession of Spain.' I did not believe a word of it, but was careful not to say so, and merely asked permission to take advantage as far as Buitrago of the escort which was going with the Spanish princes. I knew that many peasants from the neighbourhood who had taken part in the outbreak were now hiding in the country villages, and would be quite ready to

attack me if I left the town. Murat recognised the justice of my remark. I hired a horse, and travelling with the escort reached Buitrago that evening. The princes were to sleep there, so from that point there was no more escort for me, and I had to launch out into the unknown.

Our dragoon officers, seeing me make ready to start at nightfall to cross the Guadarrama Mountains, advised me to wait for daylight. But in the first place I knew that the despatches were urgent, and I did not wish the Emperor and Murat to accuse me of having slackened my pace through fear, and further I knew that the quicker I got away from the neighbourhood of the capital, and outstripped the news of the fighting, the less I should have to fear the exasperation of the people on my road. I found, in fact, that the inhabitants of Buitrago had received their first news of what had happened that morning at Madrid from the muleteers who conducted the princes' carriages, but as the postilion whom I took from Buitrago had probably heard the news from the one who had brought me there, I resolved to get rid of him by a trick. After we had gone about two leagues, I told the man that I had left in the stable of the post a handkerchief containing 20 douros (4*l.*), and that while I considered the money as practically lost, I thought it was still just possible that no one had found it, and that he must therefore go back at once to Buitrago, and that if he brought me the handkerchief and its contents at the next stage, where I would wait for him, he should have five douros for himself. Delighted with the prospect of this windfall, the postilion turned back at once, and I went on to the next stage. Nothing had been heard there of the fighting; I was in uniform: but to remove any suspicion which the postmaster and his people might have at seeing me arrive alone, I told them that the horse of the postilion who had been with me having fallen and hurt himself, I had advised the man to walk him back to Buitrago. They gave me at once a fresh horse and another postilion, and I galloped off without any qualms about disappointing the Buitrago postilion. The important thing was, that I was now in sole possession of my secret, and I knew that if I stopped

nowhere, I could reach Bayonne before rumour had brought the intelligence of the events at Madrid.

All night I travelled through the mountains—the road is good, and at daybreak I entered L'Herma. Here there was a French garrison, as indeed there was in every town which I had to pass on the way to Bayonne. Everywhere the generals and officers offered me refreshment, asking what news there was; but I kept my mouth shut, fearing lest an accident should compel me to halt somewhere, and so be outstripped by news which I had myself spread, whereby I should be exposed to an attack from the peasants.

From Madrid to Bayonne is the same distance as from Bayonne to Paris; that is to say 225 leagues, a long journey when one has to ride post with one's sword by one's side without a single quarter of an hour's rest, and in a scorching heat. I was tired out and overcome with the need of sleep, but I did not yield to it for a moment, knowing well the necessity for getting on quickly. To keep awake I paid the postillions something extra on condition that as we galloped they should sing to me their Spanish songs. At last I saw the Bidassoa, and entered France.

Maraac is only two stages from Saint-Jean de Luz. I got there on May 5, covered with dust, at the moment when the Emperor was taking an after-dinner walk in the park with the Queen of Spain on his arm and Charles IV. beside him. The Empress Josephine and the Princes Ferdinand and Charles followed them, and the rear was brought up by Marshal Duroc and several ladies. As soon as the Emperor was informed by the aide-de-camp on duty that an officer had arrived with despatches from Prince Murat, he came towards me, followed by the members of the Spanish royal family, and asked aloud: 'What news from Madrid?' The presence of the listeners was embarrassing, and as I thought that Napoleon would no doubt be glad to have the first fruits of my intelligence, I deemed it wise to do nothing but present my despatches to the Emperor and look steadily at him without answering his question. His Majesty understood me, and retired a few paces to read Murat's report.

Having finished, he called me and went towards a solitary garden-walk, asking me all the time many questions about the fighting at Madrid. I could easily see that he shared Murat's opinion and considered that the victory of May 2 must put an end to all resistance in Spain. I held the contrary belief, and if Napoleon had asked my view I should have thought it dishonourable to conceal it; but I had to confine myself to answering the Emperor's questions with due respect, and I could only indirectly let him know my presentiments. In narrating the revolution at Madrid I depicted in most vivid terms the despair of the people at hearing that the remaining members of the royal family were to be carried away, the fierce courage which the inhabitants, even the women, had shown during the fighting, the gloomy and threatening demeanour retained by the populace after our victory. I might perhaps have revealed all my thoughts, but Napoleon cut short my thoughts, exclaiming: 'Bah! they will calm down and will bless me as soon as they see their country freed from the discredit and disorder into which it has been thrown by the weakest and most corrupt administration that ever existed.' After this outburst, uttered in a sharp tone, Napoleon sent me back to the end of the garden to request the King and Queen of Spain to come to him, and followed me slowly reading over Murat's despatches. The ex-sovereigns came forward alone to meet the Emperor, and I suppose he informed them of the fighting at Madrid, for Charles came up quickly to his son Ferdinand, and said to him in a loud voice and in a tone of extreme anger: 'Wretch! you may now be satisfied! Madrid has been bathed in the blood of my subjects shed in consequence of your criminal rebellion against your father; may their blood be on your head!' The Queen joined in heaping bitter reproaches on her son, and went so far as to offer to strike him. The ladies and the officers, feeling that this distasteful spectacle was not one for them, withdrew, and Napoleon put a stop to it.

Ferdinand, who had not replied by a single word to the objurgations of his parents, resigned the crown to his father

that evening, less through contrition than through fear of being regarded as the author of the conspiracy which had overthrown Charles. Next day the old King, in his ignoble desire for revenge, encouraged by the Queen and the Prince of the Peace, made over to the Emperor all his rights to the throne of Spain on certain conditions, the principal one being that by which he was to have the estate of Compiègne with a pension of seven and a half million francs. Ferdinand was cowardly enough also to renounce his hereditary rights in favour of Napoleon, in return for a pension of a million and the château of Navarre in Normandy. As both these houses required repair, Charles, with his Queen, his daughter, and the Prince of the Peace, went for the present to Fontainebleau, while Ferdinand, his two brothers, and his uncle were sent to Valençay, in Berri, where they were well treated but kept under strict surveillance. Thus was consummated the most iniquitous spoliation which modern history records. In all times a conqueror in a fair and open war has been held to have the right to take possession of the dominions of the conquered, but I can say with sincerity that the conduct of Napoleon in this scandalous affair was unworthy of so great a man. To offer himself as mediator between a father and a son in order to draw them into a trap and then plunder them both—this was an odious atrocity which history has branded, and which Providence did not delay to punish. It was the war in Spain which brought about Napoleon's fall.

Still, to do him justice, with all his lack of political honesty, the Emperor was under no delusion as to the reprehensible nature of his action. I have heard, on the authority of one of his ministers, M. Defermon, that he admitted this at the council board, but he added that in politics one must never forget the great axiom 'success and necessity justify the means.' Now, rightly or wrongly, the Emperor was firmly convinced that the only way of keeping the north in check was to found in the south of Europe a great empire under the protection of France, which could only be done by taking possession of Spain.

Having now this fine kingdom to dispose of, Napoleon

offered it to his eldest brother, Joseph, then King of Naples. He has been blamed for not giving it to his brother-in-law Murat, who, as an experienced soldier, seemed better suited to govern a proud nation than the timid, careless, and luxurious Joseph. Doubtless when Murat first entered Spain everything about him, even to his extraordinary costume, delighted the Castilians, and if they had had then to accept a king from Napoleon's family they would have preferred the chivalrous Murat to the feeble Joseph; but since the fighting at Madrid their admiration for him had been changed to bitter hatred. I have no doubt that the Emperor had originally destined Murat for the Spanish throne, but as soon as he realised the dislike of the nation towards him he gave up the plan as impossible, and sent him to replace Joseph at Naples when he gave the Spanish crown to the latter. It was unfortunate, for in the war which presently broke out Murat would have been most useful, while King Joseph was only a hindrance.

In order to give some colour of legality to his brother's accession, Napoleon called upon all the provinces to select deputies who should come to Bayonne to frame a constitution. Many abstained, but the greater number answered the summons, some through curiosity, others in the patriotic hope that one of their kings would be restored to them. When assembled, they soon perceived that they would have no freedom of deliberation; nevertheless, whether convinced that a brother of the mighty Emperor could alone restore happiness to Spain, or urged by the desire of escaping from the trap in which they found themselves, they all recognised Joseph's sovereignty. Very few, however, remained with him, the greater part returning hurriedly to Spain, where, as soon as they arrived, they protested against the vote, which they said had been extorted from them.

I had left Bayonne on May 11 to return to Madrid with despatches from the Emperor to Murat. Throughout the provinces which I traversed I found people's minds much disturbed. It was known that Ferdinand, the darling of the people, had been forced to abdicate, and they perceived that

Napoleon was about to grasp the throne of Spain. An organised insurrection was growing up on either side. I should certainly have been assassinated had not our troops been in occupation of all the towns and villages between France and Madrid. Though I had an escort from one post to another, I was more than once attacked. A trooper was killed by my side in the defile of Pancorvo, and I came across the dead bodies of two of our soldiers in the mountains of Somo Sierra. It was the first taste of what the Spaniards were preparing for us.

The despatches which I carried to Murat contained the official announcement of his elevation to the throne of Naples. For several days he was very gloomy, and at last fell so seriously ill that Napoleon had to send General Savary to take the command of the army—a task to which his military talents were unequal, especially in the difficult circumstances which were about to occur. Murat's illness for a time endangered his life. As soon as he was better he made haste to leave Spain. Before his departure he asked me if I would stay at Madrid with General Belliard, who wished to keep me. I had foreseen this question, and as it by no means suited me, after serving under several marshals and a prince, to be lost in the obscure crowd of the officers on the general staff and do postman's work under fire, earning no glory nor hope of promotion, I answered that I was still Marshal Augereau's aide-de-camp, that he had agreed to my doing duty with Prince Murat, but that when Murat left Spain I considered my mission at an end, and asked leave to return to my former chief. So I left Madrid with Murat on June 17. We travelled by easy stages, and reached Bayonne on July 3. There Murat took the title of King of Naples. The officers of his staff going to congratulate him, he proposed to us to follow him into Italy, promising rapid promotion to those who would take service with him. All accepted except Major Lamothe and myself; for I had firmly resolved to wear no uniform but that of the French army. Leaving my horses at Bayonne, I returned to Paris, and passed three happy months with my mother and Marshal Augereau.

CHAPTER XXXVII

THE combat of May 2 and the abduction of the royal family had made the nation furious. Every province rose against Joseph's Government, and though he reached Madrid and was proclaimed on July 23, he had no authority in the country. Madrid, although the habitual residence of the sovereigns of Spain, has no influence on the provinces, each of which was once a separate kingdom, and has preserved the title. Each has its capital, its customs, its own laws, and its own local administration; so that the possession of Madrid by an enemy does not affect its independence. Thus in 1808 each province had its junta, its army, its stores, and its revenues; but the junta of Seville was recognised as the central power.

The French army would thus have been in a critical condition, with the whole of Spain in arms against it, even if it had been under the orders of an able general, and its composition as strong as it actually was weak. We suffered reverses by sea and land; a squadron had to surrender in Cadiz roads just as Marshal Moncey had to retire from the kingdom of Valencia. The junta of Seville declared war against France in the name of Ferdinand VII. General Dupont, whom Savary had imprudently despatched without support into Andalusia, found at the beginning of July that the people were all rising round him, and, learning that 10,000 men from the camp of San Roque were advancing under the orders of General Castaños, resolved to withdraw towards Madrid, and with that view sent Vedel's division to occupy the Sierra Morena and re-open communications. But, instead of following his advanced guard promptly, Dupont, who from an excellent general of division

had become a very bad commander of an army corps, resolved to give battle where he stood, and ordered Vedel's division, which was already ten leagues away, to come back. This was the first mistake, and besides this, Dupont scattered the troops that remained with him, and lost precious time at Andujar, on the banks of the Guadalquivir.

The Spaniards, reinforced by several Swiss regiments, took advantage of this delay to send part of their troops over to the bank opposite to that which our army occupied; so that we found ourselves between two fires. Still, so far nothing was lost, if our men had fought courageously and in good order; but Dupont had handled his troops so badly that on arriving before the defile of Baylen the rear of the column was three leagues from the head. Then, instead of bringing his force together, General Dupont sent each regiment and each gun into action as they came up. Our weak young soldiers, exhausted by fifteen hours' marching and eight hours' fighting, were dropping with weariness under the rays of an Andalusian sun. The most part could neither march nor bear arms any longer, and lay down instead of fighting. Then Dupont asked for a truce, which the Spaniards were all the more ready to accept that they feared matters might shortly change to their disadvantage. Vedel's division had, in fact, at that moment come up in rear of the Spanish force and was attacking them successfully. They sent a flag of truce to let the general know that an armistice had been agreed upon with General Dupont. Vedel took no notice of it and fought on vigorously. Two Spanish regiments had laid down their arms; others were in flight; and Vedel was only a short league from Dupont, and would soon have completely relieved him, when an aide-de-camp came from the latter through the enemy's army bringing orders to take no further steps as arrangements were being made for an armistice. Thereupon Vedel, instead of yielding further to the happy inspiration under which he had refused to recognise the authority of a chief who could send orders to his subordinates only by passing them through the hands of the enemy, halted in the middle of his victory and gave the

order to cease firing. The Spaniards meanwhile had only eight cartridges per man left; but their supports were coming up and they wished to gain time. General Dupont asked permission from General Reding, a Swiss in the Spanish service, to pass through with his army and return to Madrid. Reding at first agreed, but afterwards declared that he could do nothing without the authority of General Castaños, who was some leagues away. He in his turn wished to refer the matter to the junta, and they raised all sorts of difficulties.

Meanwhile Dupont's young recruits were in a most unfortunate position; he kept giving contradictory orders, alternately requiring Vedel to attack and to take back his division to Madrid. Vedel took the latter course, and the next day was at the foot of Sierra Morena, out of reach of attack from Castaños. But unluckily General Dupont had decided to capitulate, and with indescribable weakness had comprehended Vedel's troops in the capitulation, ordering them to return to Baylen. Having the way to Madrid open to them, they tumultuously refused; but instead of taking advantage of their enthusiasm, Vedel pointed out that they would expose Dupont's men to reprisals, adding that the terms of capitulation were not severe since it was stipulated that they would be taken back to France, where they would get their arms again. The officers and soldiers declared that in that case they had better retreat, arms and all, to Madrid; but General Vedel preached passive obedience until he succeeded in bringing his division back to Baylen, where it lay down its arms. General Dupont deserves much blame for having included in the capitulation a division which was already out of the enemy's reach; but what must we think of General Vedel, who obeyed the orders of a commander no longer at liberty and handed over to the Spaniards nearly 10,000 efficient men? Dupont pushed his infatuation so far as to include all the troops of his army corps, even those who had not crossed the Sierra Morena. General Castaños required that these detachments should come twenty-five leagues to lay down their arms. One commander only, who deserves to

be named, the brave Major de Sainte-Eglise, replied that he would not take orders from a general who was a prisoner of war, and by a rapid march, in spite of the attacks of the insurgent peasants, he succeeded with little loss in reaching the outposts of the French camp before Madrid. The Emperor promoted him to the rank of colonel. With the exception of this battalion, the whole of Dupont's army, 25,000 strong, was disarmed. Then the Spaniards, having no more to fear, refused to keep the articles of the capitulation, which stipulated for the return of the French troops to France, and not only declared them prisoners of war, but shamefully ill-treated them and allowed several thousand soldiers to be slaughtered by the peasants.

Dupont, Vedel, and some generals alone obtained leave to return to France. The officers and the soldiers were at first packed on board pontoons in Cadiz roads, but an epidemic fever broke out among them, and the Spanish authorities, fearing that Cadiz might be infected, sent the survivors to the desert island of Cabrera, where there was neither water nor houses. There our poor men, receiving every week some casks of brackish water, some damaged ship biscuit, and a little salt meat, lived almost like savages. Without clothing, linen, or medicine, getting no news of their families, or even from France, they were obliged to shelter themselves in burrows like wild beasts. This lasted six years, until the Peace of 1814, by which time most of the prisoners were dead of misery and grief. M. de Lasalle, who became orderly officer to King Louis Philippe, was among the number, and when he was released he, like most of his comrades, had been almost entirely naked for more than six years. When it was pointed out to the Spaniards that their violation of the Treaty of Baylen was contrary to the law of nations in force among all civilized peoples, they replied that the arrest of their king, Ferdinand VII., had been no less illegal, and that they were merely following the example which Napoleon had set them—a reproach which, it must be admitted, was not without foundation.

When the news of the disaster at Baylen reached the

Emperor his rage was fearful. Up to then he had regarded the Spaniards as on a par in courage with the Italians, and supposed that their rising was merely a peasant revolt which would quickly be dispersed by a few French battalions. But his eagles had been humbled, and French troops had lost the prestige of unbroken victory. Deeply must he have regretted that he had allowed his army to be composed of recruits, instead of sending the veterans whom he had left in Germany. His rage against the generals was indescribable. He made the mistake of imprisoning them to avoid the scandal of a trial, which led to their being regarded as the victims of arbitrary power. It was five years before they were brought to trial by court-martial.

The capitulation of Baylen, as may be supposed, caused the insurrection to spread widely; nor did the defeat of the army of the Asturias by Bessières do anything to check it. The Spanish contingent, under General La Romana, which had served under Napoleon, and had been left on the coast of the Baltic, was brought back with the help of the English. The fortresses which the Spaniards still held were defended vigorously, and open towns, following the lead of Saragossa, turned themselves into fortresses. The Spanish army of Andalusia was set free to march on Madrid, and King Joseph with an army corps retreated beyond the Ebro, where the remainder of our troops raising the sieges in which they were engaged gradually assembled. Soon we learnt a new disaster. Portugal, owing to the imprudence with which Junot had scattered his forces, had been lost to us. Attacked by Sir Arthur Wellesley with superior forces,[1] he had been compelled to capitulate at Vimeira. That day marked the beginning of Wellesley's fame and fortune; he was the junior lieutenant-general in the English army, and commanded that day only in consequence of a delay in the landing of his seniors. The terms of capitulation were that the French army should evacuate Portugal and be taken back to France by sea without being disarmed. They were faithfully

[1] English, about 16,000 men (not more than half of whom were engaged, and 18 guns; French, 14,000 men and 3 guns.

executed by the English; but instead of being landed at Bordeaux, the troops were taken to Lorient.

By this time Napoleon had ordered up from Germany three army corps of infantry and much cavalry—all veterans who had fought at Jena, Eylau, and Friedland. To these he added a large portion of his guard, and prepared to set out himself for Spain, at their head. Their number amounted to more than 100,000, which, with the divisions already in Spain, would raise our army to 200,000 men.

Some days before starting, the Emperor, intending to take Augereau with him if the wound he had received at Eylau allowed him to take the command, had summoned him to Saint-Cloud. Being on duty, I accompanied the Marshal, and while Napoleon walked about with Augereau I stayed on one side with his aides-de-camp. It appears that after discussing the matter which they had in hand their conversation turned on the battle of Eylau, and the noble conduct of the 14th. Augereau spoke of the devoted manner in which I had carried orders to that regiment through the swarming Cossacks, and entered into full details of the dangers which I had run in accomplishing that mission, and of the really miraculous manner in which I had escaped death after being stripped and left naked on the snow. The Emperor replied: 'Marbot's conduct was admirable, and I have given him the Cross for it.' The Marshal having quite correctly declared that I had received no reward, Napoleon maintained his statement, and in order to prove it sent for Prince Berthier, the adjutant-general. He looked through the registers, the result of his search being the discovery that the Emperor, on hearing of my exploit at Eylau, had indeed entered the name of Marbot, aide-de-camp to Marshal Augereau, among the officers to be decorated. He had, however, not added my Christian name, not knowing that my brother was on the marshal's staff as supernumerary; so that when the time came to deliver the patents, Prince Berthier, always very busy, had said, to save his secretary trouble, 'The Cross must be given to the elder.' So my brother got decorated, though it was his first action, and, since he was only on temporary leave

from the Indies, and his regiment was at the Isle of France, he did not officially even belong to the Grand Army. Thus was fulfilled the prediction which Augereau had expressed to him when he said, 'If you come on the same staff as your brother you will do each other harm.' Anyhow, after scolding Berthier a little, the Emperor came towards me, spoke to me kindly, and, taking the Cross from one of his orderly officers, fastened it on my breast. October 29, 1808, was one of the happiest days of my life. At that time the Legion of Honour had not been lavishly given, and a value was attached to it which since then it has unfortunately lost. Decorated at 26! I was beside myself with joy. The good marshal's satisfaction was equal to mine, and in order to allow my mother to share it he took me to her. No promotion that I ever got pleased her as much. To complete my satisfaction, Marshal Duroc sent for the hat which a cannon-ball had pierced on my head at the battle of Eylau, and which the Emperor wished to see.

By Napoleon's own advice, Augereau declined to go on the campaign. Accordingly, he asked Lannes, who had a command in Spain, kindly to take me with him; not, however, as supernumerary, in which capacity I had been with that marshal in the Friedland campaign, but as a regular member of the staff; but if Augereau returned to duty, I was to go back to him. So in November I set out for Bayonne, where, for the fourth time, I was to report myself to a new chief. My outfit had been left there, and was all ready for me. Indeed, I was able to lend the marshal a horse, as his had not yet come when the Emperor crossed the frontier. I knew the country through which we had to pass, and the ways of it, well; the language a little; so that I was able to be of some use to the marshal, who had never been in these parts before.

Nearly all the officers who had been on Lannes' staff having got promotion at the Peace of Tilsit, the marshal was obliged to form a new staff for Spain. He himself was a man of strong character; but from various causes he was obliged to select officers most of whom, for one reason or another, had had little experience of war. They were all brave enough;

but it was the least military staff on which I had ever served. The senior aide-de-camp was Colonel O'Meara, brother-in-law to Clarke, Duke of Feltre. He ended his days as commandant of a small place on the Belgian frontier. Then came Major Guéhéneuc, brother-in-law to Lannes, who commanded the 26th Light Infantry at the Beresina. Major Saint-Mars was the third. After being taken prisoner in Russia he became general secretary of the Legion of Honour. I was the fourth. The fifth was Marquis Serafino d'Albuquerque, a great Spanish noble, fond of good living, and very plucky. He was killed by a cannon-ball at Essling. Sixth, Captain Watteville, son of the Landammann of the Helvetic Republic, representing the Swiss nation; Lannes being titular colonel of the Swiss troops in the French service. He too went on the Russian campaign as a major of lancers. In spite of my care, he succumbed to cold and fatigue as we got near Wilna. The seventh was the famous Labédoyère. He was a tall and handsome man, brave, cultivated, and witty; a good talker, though with a slight stammer. He became aide-de-camp to Prince Eugène Beauharnais, and was colonel in 1814. The story of his bringing his regiment over to the Emperor at the return from Elba is well known. Under the Restoration he was tried and shot. The eighth aide-de-camp was named de Viry. He belonged to an ancient Savoyard family. So far as I knew, he had no bad qualities, and I became very intimate with him; he was severely wounded at Essling, and died in my arms at Vienna. Besides these the marshal had two supernumerary officers attached to his staff, Captain Dagusan and Sub-lieutenant Le Couteulx de Canteleu.

On my joining the staff, Marshal Lannes warned me that he reckoned very much on my help, both on account of the report of me which he had received from Augereau and from the manner in which I had served under himself in the Friedland campaign. 'If you do not get killed,' said he, 'I will see that your promotion comes quickly.' The marshal never promised in vain, and he was in such high favour with the Emperor that everything was possible to him. I promised to do my duty with unswerving courage and zeal.

We left Bayonne and marched with the troops as far as the Ebro, where we joined King Joseph and the army which had made the recent campaign. Rest in camp life had given these young recruits a military air, which they had been far from having in the previous July. But what most raised their tone was finding themselves under the command of the Emperor in person, and hearing that the veterans of the Grand Army had arrived. The Spaniards on their side were astonished and alarmed at the sight of the old grenadiers of the Grand Army, and realised that a change in the aspect of affairs was going to take place. And, indeed, hardly had the Emperor arrived on the Ebro when he launched numerous columns across the river. All that tried to make head against them were exterminated, or saved themselves only by rapid flight. The Spaniards, however, astonished but not discouraged, rallied several army corps under the walls of Burgos, and made bold to accept battle. It took place on November 9 and did not last long, for the enemy, driven in at the first charge, fled in all directions, pursued by our cavalry, with heavy loss.

During this battle, a remarkable, and, happily, very uncommon incident occurred. Two young infantry lieutenants quarrelled, and fought a duel in front of their battalion under a storm of cannon-balls from the enemy. One of them had his cheek laid open by a sword-cut. The colonel put them under arrest and brought them before the marshal, who sent them to the citadel of Burgos, and reported them to the Emperor. He gave them a further punishment, forbidding them to go into action with their company for a month. At the end of this period the regiment to which these two foolish fellows belonged was being reviewed by the Emperor at Madrid. He ordered the colonel to present to him as usual those whom he proposed to promote in the place of officers killed. The sub-lieutenant, who had had the wound in his cheek, was an excellent soldier. His colonel thought that he ought not to lose his promotion for a fault which, though serious, was not dishonourable. He therefore submitted his name to the Emperor, who, per-

ceiving a recent scar on the young man's face, remembered the duel at Burgos, and asked him in a severe tone, 'Where did you get that wound?' Thereupon the sub-lieutenant, wishing neither to tell a lie nor to confess, turned the difficulty very cleverly. Placing his finger on his cheek, he said, 'I got it *there*, sir.' The Emperor understood, and as he liked men of a ready wit, far from being angry at this original repartee, he smiled, and said to the officer, 'Your colonel proposes you for the rank of lieutenant; I grant it you, but in future behave better or I shall cashier you.'

At Burgos I found my brother, who was on the staff of Prince[1] Berthier, chief of the general staff. Lannes' military talent increased every day, and the Emperor, who had a very high opinion of him, no longer gave him any stated command, wishing to keep him about his person and send him wherever things had got into disorder, being sure that he would quickly set them to rights. Thus, considering that he had left the town of Saragossa occupied by the insurgents of Arragon, and supported by the army of Castaños, which had conquered Dupont, and that old General Moncey was only bungling, Napoleon ordered Lannes to go to Logroño, take command of the Army of the Ebro, and attack Castaños. Thus Moncey came under the orders of Lannes. It was the first case in which one marshal of the Empire had commanded another. Lannes showed himself worthy of this mark of confidence and distinction. He started, accompanied by his staff alone, and we travelled by post. You must know that at this time there were no draught horses in Spain, but the post-houses keep the best nags in Europe. We rode, therefore, night and day, escorted from stage to stage by detachments of cavalry. In this way we went back as far as Miranda del Ebro, whence we reached Logroño, following the river. Marshal Moncey appeared much annoyed at finding himself, the senior marshal, placed under the orders of the junior, but he had no choice but to obey.

[1] Of Neuchatel. He acted usually as chief of the staff to Napoleon. Like Junot, he died (in 1815) by a fall from a window; whether voluntary or not is uncertain.

See what the presence of a single capable and energetic man can do. This army of recruits, which Moncey had not dared to lead against the enemy, were set in motion by Lannes on the day of his arrival, and marched against the enemy with ardour. We came up with him on the following day, the 23rd, in front of Tudela, and after three hours' fighting the conquerors of Baylen were driven in, beaten, completely routed, and fled headlong towards Saragossa, leaving thousands of dead on the field. We captured a great many men, several colours, and all the artillery; a complete victory. During this affair I had a bullet through my sabretache. Just at the outset I had had a lively quarrel with Labédoyère over the following matter. He had just bought a young and ill-broken horse, which at the sound of the cannon reared up and absolutely refused to go on Labédoyère leapt off in a rage, drew his sword, and hamstrung the unhappy horse, who fell all bleeding on the grass, dragging himself along on his forefeet. I could not contain my indignation, and expressed it to him in strong terms; but Labédoyère took it very ill, and we should have come to blows had we not been in the presence of the enemy. The report of this incident got about in the staff, and Marshal Lannes, very angry, declared that he would not have Labédoyère any more among his aides-de-camp. The latter, in despair, had seized his pistols to blow his brains out, when our friend de Viry pointed out to him that it would be more honourable to seek death in the ranks of the enemy than to inflict it on himself. Just at that moment, de Viry, who was near the marshal, was ordered to lead a cavalry regiment against the Spanish battery. Labédoyère joined the regiment as it was charging, and was one of the first to dash into the battery. It was carried, and we saw de Viry and Labédoyère bringing back a gun which they had taken together. Neither of them was wounded, but Labédoyère had got a grapeshot through his busby, two inches from his head. The marshal was much touched by this courageous act; all the more so, that, after having handed over the gun to him, Labédoyère was getting ready to hurl himself a

second time on the enemy's bayonets. The marshal held him back, and, pardoning his fault, restored him to his place on the staff. That same evening Labédoyère came in the most honourable way to shake hands with me, and we ever afterwards lived on the best of terms. He and de Viry were named in the despatches, and promoted to captains a little time after the battle.

CHAPTER XXXVIII

I HAVE now reached one of the most terrible experiences of my military career. Marshal Lannes had just won a great victory, and the next day, after having received the reports of the generals, he wrote his despatch for one of our officers to take to the Emperor. Napoleon's practice was to give a step to the officer who brought him the news of an important success, and the marshals on their side entrusted such tasks to officers for whose speedy promotion they were anxious. It was a form of recommendation which Napoleon never failed to recognise. Marshal Lannes did me the honour of appointing me to carry the news of the victory of Tudela, and I could indulge the hope of being major before long. But, alas! I had yet much blood to lose before I reached that rank.

The high road from Bayonne to Madrid by Vittoria, Miranda del Ebro, Burgos, and Aranda forks off at Miranda from that leading to Saragossa by Logroño. A road from Tudela to Aranda across the mountains about Soria forms the third side of a great triangle. While Lannes was reaching Tudela the Emperor had advanced from Burgos to Aranda. It was, therefore, much shorter for me to go from Tudela to Aranda than by way of Miranda del Ebro. The latter road, however, had the advantage of being covered by the French armies; while the other, no doubt, would be full of Spanish fugitives who had taken refuge after Tudela in the mountains. The Emperor, however, had informed Lannes that he was sending Ney's corps direct from Aranda to Tudela; so, thinking Ney to be at no great distance, and that an advanced force which he had pushed on the day after the battle to get touch of him at Taragona would secure me from attack as far as Aranda,

Lannes ordered me to take the shortest road. I may frankly admit that if I had had my choice I should have preferred to make the round by Miranda and Burgos; but the marshal's orders were positive, and how could I express any fear for my own person in the presence of a man who knew no more fear for others than he did for himself?

The duties of marshal's aide-de-camp in Spain were terrible. During the revolutionary wars the generals had couriers paid by the state to carry their despatches; but the Emperor, finding that these men were not capable of giving any intelligible account of what they had seen, did away with them, and ordered that in future despatches should be carried by aides-de-camp. This was all very well as long as we were at war among the good Germans, to whom it never occurred to attack a French messenger; but the Spaniards waged fierce war against them. This was of great advantage to the insurgents, for the contents of our despatches informed them of the movements of our armies. I do not think I am exaggerating when I say that more than 200 staff officers were killed or captured during the Peninsular War. One may regret the death of an ordinary courier, but it is less serious than the loss of a promising officer, who, moreover, is exposed to the risks of the battle-field in addition to those of a posting journey. A great number of vigorous men well skilled in their business begged to be allowed to do this duty, but the Emperor never consented.

Just as I was starting from Tudela, Major Saint-Mars hazarded a remark intended to dissuade Lannes from sending me over the mountains. The marshal, however, answered, 'Oh, he will meet Ney's advance guard to-night, and find troops echelonned all the way to the Emperor's head-quarters.' This was too decided for any opposition, so I left Tudela November 4, at nightfall, with a detachment of cavalry, and got without any trouble as far as Taragona, at the foot of the mountains. In this little town I found Lannes' advance guard. The officer in command, hearing nothing of Ney, had pushed an infantry post six leagues forward towards Agreda. But as this body was detached from its supports, it had been

ordered to fall back on Taragona if the night passed without Ney's scouts appearing.

After Taragona there is no more high road. The way lies entirely over mountain paths covered with stones and splinters of rock. The officer commanding our advanced guard had, therefore, only infantry and a score of hussars of the 2nd (Chamborant) Regiment. He gave me a troop horse and two orderlies, and I went on my way in brilliant moonlight. When we had gone two or three leagues we heard several musket-shots, and bullets whistled close past us. We could not see the marksmen, who were hidden among the rocks. A little farther on we found the corpses of two French infantry soldiers, recently killed. They were entirely stripped, but their shakoes were near them, by the numbers on which I could see that they belonged to one of the regiments in Ney's corps. Some little distance farther we saw a horrible sight. A young officer of the 10th Mounted Chasseurs, still wearing his uniform, was nailed by his hands and feet, head downwards, to a barn door. A small fire had been lighted beneath him. Happily, his tortures had been ended by death; but as the blood was still flowing from his wounds, it was clear that the murderers were not far off. I drew my sword; my two hussars handled their carbines. It was just as well that we were on our guard, for a few moments later seven or eight Spaniards, two of them mounted, fired upon us from behind a bush. We were none of us wounded, and my two hussars replied to the fire, and killed each his man. Then, drawing their swords, they dashed at the rest. I should have been very glad to follow them, but my horse had lost a shoe among the stones and was limping, so that I could not get him into a gallop. I was the more vexed because I feared that the hussars might let themselves be carried away in the pursuit and get killed in some ambush. I called them for five minutes; then I heard the voice of one of them saying, in a strong Alsatian accent, 'Ah! you thieves! you don't know the Chamborant Hussars yet. You shall see that they mean business.' My troopers had knocked over two more Spaniards, a Capuchin mounted on the horse of the poor lieutenant,

whose haversack he had put over his own neck, and a peasant on a mule, with the clothes of the slaughtered soldiers on his back. It was quite clear that we had got the murderers. The Emperor had given strict orders that every Spanish civilian taken in arms should be shot on the spot; and, moreover, what could we do with these two brigands, who were already seriously wounded, and who had just killed three Frenchmen so barbarously? I moved on, therefore, so as not to witness the execution, and the hussars polished off the monk and the peasant, repeating, 'Ah, you don't know the Chamborant!' I could not understand how an officer and two privates of Ney's corps could be so near Taragona, when their regiments had not come that way; but most probably they had been captured elsewhere, and were being taken to Saragossa, when their escort learned the defeat of their countrymen at Tudela, and massacred their prisoners in revenge for it.

After this not very encouraging start I continued my journey. We had gone for some hours, when we saw a bivouac fire of the detachment belonging to the advance guard which I had left at Taragona. The sub-lieutenant in command, having no tidings of Ney, was prepared to return to Taragona at daybreak, in pursuance of his orders. He knew that we were barely two leagues from Agreda, but did not know of which side that town was in possession. This was perplexing for me. The infantry detachment would return in a few hours, and if I went back with it, when it might be that in another league I should fall in with Ney's column, I should be giving a poor display of courage, and laying myself open to reproach from Lannes. On the other hand, if Ney was still a day or two's march away, it was almost certain that I should be murdered by the peasants of the mountains or by fugitive soldiers. What was more, I had to travel alone, for my two brave hussars had orders to return to Taragona when we had found the infantry detachment. No matter; I determined to push on; but then came the difficulty of finding a mount. There was no farm or village in this deserted place where I could procure a horse.

That which I was riding was dead lame; and even if the hussars had been able, without incurring severe punishment, to lend me one of theirs, theirs were much fatigued. The horse that had belonged to the officer of chasseurs had received a bullet in the thigh during the fighting. There was only the peasant's mule left. This was a handsome beast, and, according to the laws of war, belonged to the two hussars, who, no doubt, reckoned on selling her when they got back to the army. Still the good fellows made no demur about lending her to me, and put my saddle on her back. But the infernal beast, more accustomed to the pack than to the saddle, was so restive, that directly I tried to get her away from the group of horses and make her go alone, she fell to kicking, until I had to choose between being sent over a precipice and dismounting.

So I decided to set out on foot. After I had taken farewell of the infantry officer, this excellent young man, M. Tassin by name—he had been a friend of my poor brother Felix at the military school—came running after me, and said that he could not bear to let me thus expose myself all alone, and that though he had no orders, and his men were raw recruits, with little experience in war, he must send one with me, so that I might at least have a musket and some cartridges in case of an attack. We agreed that I should send the man back with Ney's corps; and I went off, with the soldier accompanying me. He was a slow-speaking Norman, with plenty of slyness under an appearance of good-nature. The Normans are for the most part brave, as I learnt when I commanded the 23rd Chasseurs, where I had five or six hundred of them. Still, in order to know how far I could rely on my follower, I chatted with him as we went along, and asked if he would stand his ground if we were attacked. He said neither yes nor no, but answered, 'Well, zur, us shall zee.' Whence I inferred that when the moment of danger arrived my new companion was not unlikely to go and see how things were getting on in the rear.

The moon had just set, and as yet daylight had not appeared. It was pitch-dark, and at every step we stumbled

over the great stones with which these mountain paths are covered. It was an unpleasant situation, but I hoped soon to come upon Ney's troops, and the fact of having seen the bodies of soldiers belonging to his corps increased the hope. So I went steadily on, listening for diversion to the Norman's stories of his country. Dawn appeared at last, and I saw the first houses of a large village. It was Agreda. I was alarmed at finding no outposts, for it showed that not only did no troops of the marshal's occupy the place, but that his army corps must be at least half a day farther on. The map showed no village within five or six leagues of Agreda, and it was impossible that the regiments could be quartered in the mountains, far from any inhabited place. So I kept on my guard and before going any farther reconnoitred the position.

Agreda stands in a rather broad valley. It is built at the foot of a lofty hill, steeply escarped on both sides. The southern slope, which reaches the village, is planted with large vineyards. The ridge is rough and rocky, and the northern slope covered with thick coppice, a torrent flowing at the foot. Beyond are seen lofty mountains, uncultivated and uninhabited. The principal street of Agreda runs through the whole length of the place, with narrow lanes leading to the vineyards opening into it. As I entered the village I had these lanes and the vineyards on my right. This detail is important to the understanding of my story.

Everybody was asleep in Agreda; the moment was favourable for going through it. Besides, I had some hope—feeble, it is true—that when I reached the farther end I might perhaps see the fires of Marshal Ney's advance guard. So I went forward, sword in hand, bidding my soldier cock his musket. The main street was covered with a thick bed of damp leaves, which the people placed there to make manure; so that our footsteps made no sound, of which I was glad. I walked in the middle of the street, with the soldier on my right; but, finding himself no doubt in a too conspicuous position, he gradually sheered off to the houses, keeping close to the walls so that he might be less visible in case of

an attack, or better placed for reaching one of the lanes which open into the country. This showed me how little I could rely on the man; but I made no remark to him. The day was beginning to break. We passed the whole of the main street without meeting anyone. Just as I was congratulating myself on reaching the last houses of the village, I found myself, at twenty-five paces' distance, face to face with four Royal Spanish Carabineers on horseback, with drawn swords. Under any other circumstances I might have taken them for French gendarmes, their uniforms being exactly similar, but the gendarmes never march with the extreme advanced guard. These men, therefore, could not belong to Ney's corps, and I at once perceived they were the enemy. In a moment I faced about, but just as I had turned round to the direction from which I had come I saw a blade flash six inches from my face. I threw my head sharply back, but nevertheless got a severe sabre-cut on my forehead, of which I carry the scar over my left eyebrow to this day. The man who had wounded me was the corporal of the carabineers, who, having left his four troopers outside the village, had according to military practice gone forward to reconnoitre. That I had not met him was probably due to the fact that he had been in some side lane, while I had passed through the main street. He was now coming back through the street to rejoin his troopers, when, seeing me, he had come up noiselessly over the layer of leaves, and was just going to cleave my head from behind, when, by turning round I presented to him my face and received his blow on my forehead. At the same moment the four carabineers, who seeing that their corporal was all ready for me had not stirred, trotted up to join him, and all five dashed upon me. I ran mechanically towards the houses on the right in order to get my back against a wall; but by good luck I found, two paces off, one of the steep and narrow lanes which went up into the vineyards. The soldier had already reached it. I flew up there too, with the five carabineers after me; but at any rate they could not attack me all at once, for there was only room for one horse to pass. The brigadier went in front; the other four filed after him. My

position, although not as unfavourable as it would have been in the street, where I should have been surrounded, still remained alarming; the blood flowing freely from my wound had in a moment covered my left eye, with which I could not see at all, and I felt that it was coming towards my right eye, so that I was compelled by fear of getting blinded to keep my head bent over the left shoulder so as to bring the blood to that side. I could not staunch it, being obliged to defend myself against the corporal, who was cutting at me heavily. I parried as well as I could, going up backwards all the time. After getting rid of my scabbard and my busby, the weight of which hampered me, not daring to turn my head for fear of losing sight of my adversary, whose sword was crossed with mine, I told the light-infantryman, whom I believed to be behind me, to place his musket on my shoulder and fire at the Spanish corporal. Seeing no barrel, however, I leapt a pace back and turned my head quickly. Lo and behold, there was my scoundrel of a Norman soldier flying up the hill as fast as his legs would carry him! The corporal thereupon attacked with redoubled vigour, and, seeing that he could not reach me, made his horse rear so that his feet struck me more than once on the breast. Luckily, as the ground went on rising the horse had no good hold with his hind legs, and every time that he came down again I landed a sword-cut on his nose with such effect that the animal presently refused to rear at me any more. Then the brigadier, losing his temper, called out to the trooper behind him, 'Take your carbine: I will stoop down, and you can aim at the Frenchman over my shoulders.' I saw that this order was my death-signal; but as in order to execute it the trooper had to sheathe his sword and unhook his carbine, and that all this time the corporal never ceased thrusting at me, leaning right over his horse's neck, I determined on a desperate action which would be either my salvation or my ruin. Keeping my eye fixed on the Spaniard, and seeing in his that he was on the point of again stooping over his horse to reach me, I did not move until the very instant when he was lowering the upper part of his body towards me;

then I took a pace to the right, and, leaning quickly over to that side, I avoided my adversary's blow, and plunged half my sword-blade into his left flank. With a fearful yell the corporal fell back on the croup of his horse; he would probably have rolled to the ground if the trooper behind him had not caught him in his arms. My rapid movement in stooping had caused the despatch which I was carrying to fall out of the pocket of my pelisse. I picked it up quickly, and at once hastened to the end of the lane where the vines began. There I turned round, and saw the carabineers busy round their wounded corporal, and apparently much embarrassed with him and with their horses in the steep and narrow passage.

This fight took less time than I have taken to relate it. Finding myself rid, at least for the moment, of my enemies, I went through the vines and reached the edge of the hill. Then I considered that it would be impossible for me to accomplish my errand and reach the Emperor at Aranda. I resolved, therefore, to return to Marshal Lannes, regaining first the place where I had left M. Tassin and his picket of infantry. I did not hope to find them still there; but at any rate the army which I had left the day before was in that direction. I looked for my soldier in vain, but I saw something that was of more use to me—a spring of clear water. I halted there a moment, and, tearing off a corner of my shirt, I made a compress which I fastened over my wound with my handkerchief. The blood spurting from my forehead had stained the despatches which I held in my hand, but I was too much occupied with my awkward position to mind that.

The agitations of the past night, my long walk over the stony paths in boots and spurs, the fight in which I had just been engaged, the pain in my head, and the loss of blood had exhausted my strength. I had taken no food since leaving Tudela, and here I had nothing but water to refresh myself with. I drank long draughts of it, and should have rested longer by the spring had I not perceived three of the Spanish carabineers riding out of Agreda and coming towards me through the vines. If they had been sharp enough to dismount and take off their long boots, they

would probably have succeeded in reaching me; but their horses, unable to pass between the vinestocks, ascended the steep and rocky paths with difficulty. Indeed, when they reached the upper end of the vineyards they found themselves brought up by the great rocks, on the top of which I had taken refuge, and unable to climb any farther. Then the troopers, passing along the bottom of the rocks, marched parallel with me a long musket-shot off. They called to me to surrender, saying that as soldiers they would treat me as a prisoner of war, while if the peasants caught me I should infallibly be murdered. This reasoning was sound, and I admit that if I had not been charged with despatches for the Emperor, I was so exhausted that I should perhaps have surrendered.

However, wishing to preserve to the best of my ability the precious charge which had been entrusted to me, I marched on without answering. Then the three troopers, taking their carbines, opened fire upon me. Their bullets struck the rocks at my feet, but none touched me, the distance being too great for a correct aim. I was alarmed, not at the fire, but at the notion that the reports would probably attract the peasants who would be going to their work in the morning, and quite expected to be attacked by these fierce mountaineers. My presentiment seemed to be verified, for I perceived some fifteen men half a league away in the valley advancing towards me at a run. They held in their hands something that flashed in the sun. I made no doubt that they were peasants armed with their spades, and that it was the iron of these that shone thus. I gave myself up for lost, and in my despair I was on the point of letting myself slide down over the rocks on the north side of the hill to the torrent, crossing it as best I could, and hiding myself in some chasm of the great mountains which rise on the farther side of the gorge. Then, if I was not discovered, and if I still had the strength, I should set out when night came in the direction of Taragona.

This plan, though offering many chances of failure, was my last hope. Just as I was about to put it into execution,

I perceived that the three carabineers had given up firing on me, and gone forward to reconnoitre the group which I had taken for peasants. At their approach the iron instruments which I had taken for spades or mattocks were lowered, and I had the inexpressible joy of seeing a volley fired at the Spanish carabineers. Instantly turning, they took flight towards Agreda, as it seemed, with two of their number wounded. 'The newcomers, then, are French!' I exclaimed. 'Here goes to meet them!' and, regaining a little strength from the joy of being delivered, I descended, leaning on my sword. The French had caught sight of me; they climbed the hill, and I found myself in the arms of the brave Lieutenant Tassin.

This providential rescue had come about as follows. The soldier who had deserted me while I was engaged with the carabineers in the streets of Agreda had quickly reached the vines; thence, leaping across the vinestocks, ditches, rocks, and hedges, he had very quickly run the two leagues which lay between him and the place where we had left M. Tassin's picket. The detachment was on the point of starting for Taragona, and was eating its soup, when my Norman came up all out of breath. Not wishing, however, to lose a mouthful, he seated himself by a cooking-pot and began to make a very tranquil breakfast, without saying a word about what had happened at Agreda. By great good luck he was noticed by M. Tassin, who, surprised at seeing him returned, asked him where he had quitted the officer whom he had been told off to escort. 'Good Lord, sir,' replied the Norman, 'I left him in that big village with his head half split open, and fighting with Spanish troopers, and they were cutting away at him with their swords like anything.' At these words Lieutenant Tassin ordered his detachment to arms, picked the fifteen most active, and went off at the double towards Agreda. The little troop had gone a league when they heard shots, and inferred from them that I was still alive but in urgent need of succour. Stimulated by the hope of saving me, the brave fellows doubled their pace, and finally perceived me on the ridge of the hill, serving as a mark for three Spanish troopers.

M. Tassin and his men were tired, and I was at the end of my strength. We halted, therefore, for a little, and meanwhile you may imagine that I expressed my warmest gratitude to the lieutenant and his men, who were almost as glad as I was. We returned to the bivouac where M. Tassin had left the rest of his people. The *cantinière* of the company was there with her mule carrying two skins of wine, bread, and ham. I bought the lot and gave them to the soldiers, and we breakfasted, as I was very glad to do, the two hussars whom I had left there the night before sharing in the meal. One of these mounted the monk's mule and lent me his horse, and so we set out for Taragona. I was in horrible pain, because the blood had hardened over my wound. At Taragona I rejoined Lannes' advance guard; the general in command had my wound dressed, and gave me a horse and an escort of two hussars. I reached Tudela at midnight, and was at once received by the marshal, who, though ill himself, seemed much touched by my misfortune. It was necessary, however, that the despatch about the battle of Tudela should be promptly forwarded to the Emperor, who must be impatiently awaiting news from the army on the Ebro. Enlightened by what had befallen me in the mountains, the marshal consented that the officer bearing it should go by Miranda and Burgos, where the presence of French troops on the roads made the way perfectly safe. I should have liked very much to be the bearer, but I was in such pain and so tired that it would have been physically impossible for me to ride hard. The marshal therefore entrusted the duty to his brother-in-law, Major Guéhéneuc. I handed him the despatches stained with my blood. Major Saint-Mars, the secretary, wished to re-copy them and change the envelope. 'No, no,' cried the marshal, 'the Emperor ought to see how valiantly Captain Marbot has defended them.' So he sent off the packet just as it was, adding a note to explain the reason of the delay, eulogising me, and asking for a reward to Lieutenant Tassin and his men, who had hastened so zealously to my succour, without reckoning the danger to which they might have been exposed if the enemy had been in force.

The Emperor did, as a matter of fact, a little while after, grant the Cross both to M. Tassin and to his sergeant, and a gratuity of 100 francs to each of the men who had accompanied them. As for the Norman soldier, he was tried by court-martial for deserting his post in the presence of the enemy, and condemned to drag a shot for two years, and to finish his time of service in a pioneer company.

CHAPTER XXXIX

LANNES advanced to Saragossa; but, having no siege artillery, he was content for the moment to guard the principal approaches, and, leaving Marshal Moncey in command, went to rejoin the Emperor. Being, as I have said, ill, he was obliged to travel in a carriage, relays being furnished by the draught-horses of the army. I anticipated a disagreeable journey; for though we should halt at night, seven or eight hours' riding would increase the pain of my wound, already severe.

But the marshal kindly gave me a place in his carriage, together with his friends Generals Pouzet and Frère. They were fond of chatting, and at times of joking at the expense of their friends, and as they had only known me a short time my presence embarrassed them. But the marshal said, 'He is a good lad; you can talk before him,' and they took advantage freely of his opinion. Although we rested at night, I found the journey very fatiguing. We passed Logroño, Miranda, and Burgos, and went on foot up the celebrated gorge of Somo Sierra, which had been carried a few days before, under the Emperor's eyes, by the Polish lancers of his guard. It was in this fight that General Montbrun, who afterwards became famous, distinguished himself. He was with the head-quarter staff, when the Emperor, who had got some hours in advance of his infantry, reached the foot of Somo Sierra, having only his Polish lancers with him. The high road, at that point very steep, and closed in by mountains, was found to be barred by a small earthwork defended by several thousand Spaniards. Napoleon wished to reach Buitrago that day, so, finding his march arrested, and judging that the infantry could not come in for some time, he ordered the Poles to force the passage.

The Poles have only one good quality, but that they possess in the fullest measure—they are very brave. Their commanders, having seen no service, did not know that in passing a defile it is necessary to leave a squadron's distance between every two squadrons, so that if the leaders are repulsed they may find in rear of them an open space in which to re-form and not be driven back upon the squadrons following. The Polish officers therefore launched their regiment into the defile without getting them into a proper formation. Received with a hail of bullets on both flanks, and finding the road barred at the highest point, they suffered considerable loss, increased by the way in which the first squadron fell back in disorder upon the second, the second on the third, and so on, until the regiment, now only a disorganised crowd on an enclosed road, could not wheel about, and was being shot down at almost point-blank range by the Spaniards posted on the rocks. It was difficult to disentangle this mass; when it was at last managed the Poles re-formed in the plain, under the Emperor's eyes. He praised their courage, but blamed their lack of method in attacking. The officers admitted it, and expressed their regret that they had not been led by an experienced general. Then Berthier, wishing to do a good turn to Montbrun, who was out of favour at the moment, but whom he knew to be an excellent cavalry officer, drew Napoleon's attention to his presence. The Emperor called him, and put him in command of the lancers, with orders to renew the attack.

Montbrun was a splendid man, in the same style as Murat; lofty stature, a scarred face, a black beard, of soldierly bearing, and an admirable horseman. The Poles took to him, and promised to follow his instructions; and Montbrun, having made the squadrons take their intervals, and seeing that everything was in proper order, placed himself boldly at their head and dashed into the gorge. Some squadrons were at first shaken by the fire, but as the different parts of the column were at sufficient distance to prevent any serious disorder, they recovered, and presently the top of the ascent was reached. General Montbrun dismounted, and was the first to run up to the entrenchments to tear out the palisades

under a hail of bullets. The Poles followed his example; the entrenchments were carried and the regiment, remounting, charged the Spaniards, with great slaughter, for the ground, opening out and sloping down, allowed the lancers to reach the enemy's infantry as they fled in disorder. By the time the Emperor reached the top, not only was the French flag to be seen floating over Buitrago, but Montbrun's cavalry was pursuing the routed Spaniards a league beyond the town. That evening Napoleon complimented the Poles, and appointed Montbrun general of division. He commanded a division soon after in Austria, and in 1810 was put in chief command of all the cavalry of the Army of Portugal. He was killed at the battle of the Moskwa.

When Lannes had examined the position we descended to Buitrago, and the next day reached Madrid, which had been occupied by Napoleon only after serious fighting. Lannes presented me to him, and he received me kindly, promising to reward me ere long for my conduct at Agreda. We found M. Guéhéneuc at Madrid in the uniform of a colonel, having been promoted by the Emperor on delivering the despatch stained with my blood. Guéhéneuc was a good fellow; he came to me and said, 'You had the danger, and got the sword-cut, and I have got the step; but I hope that your promotion will not be slow in coming.' I hoped so too; but I will frankly admit that I was a little annoyed with the marshal for the obstinacy with which he had insisted on making me go by Agreda. However, one must submit to one's destiny. Marshal Lannes lodged at Madrid in the same house as Murat had occupied. I found that the kind Señor Hernandez, hearing of my arrival, had come to ask me to stay with him. I was the more glad to accept, since my wound had got poisoned, and good nursing was necessary. This my host gave me in plenty, and I was on the way to get well, when new events compelled me to return to the field.

We had been barely a week at Madrid, when the Emperor learnt, on December 21, that the Portuguese army was daring to march against the Spanish capital, and was

only at a few days' distance. Orders were instantly given to march and he left the town at the head of several army corps, going towards Valladolid, from which direction the English, under Sir John Moore, were expected. Marshal Lannes, being quite recovered, was to accompany the Emperor on horseback. He suggested to me that I should stay at Madrid till my wound was completely healed; but there were two reasons against this. In the first place, I wished to be present at the battle with the English; and secondly, I knew that the Emperor scarcely ever promoted people in their absence, and I was anxious to obtain the promised step to major, so I got ready to start. The only thing that troubled me was that by reason of my wound I could wear neither cocked hat nor busby. The handkerchief bound round my head was not quite a sufficiently military head-gear to appear among a staff closely attached to that of the Emperor. The sight of a mameluke of the guard with his turban and red fez gave me an idea. I had a cap of the same colour; round this I wound a smart silk handkerchief, and placed the whole over my bandages.

We marched the first night to the foot of the Guadarrama. There was a sharp frost, and the ice on the roads caused the troops—the cavalry especially—to march with difficulty. The marshal constantly sent officers to see that the column was in good order, but kindly exempted me from this duty. While our colleagues were carrying orders N—— and I were often alone with the marshal. N—— beckoned to me and held out a bottle of kirsch. I declined, with thanks; my friend put the neck of the bottle into his mouth, and in less than a quarter of an hour had emptied it. Suddenly, like a Colossus overthrown, he rolled to the ground. The marshal broke out angrily, but N—— replied, 'It is not my fault; there is ice between my saddle and my seat!' At this novel and quaint excuse, in spite of his wrath, the marshal could not help laughing. Then he said to me, 'Put him into one of the provision wagons.' I obeyed, and our comrade went to sleep on the sacks of rice, all among the hams and saucepans.

Next day a furious snowstorm, with a fierce wind, made the passage of the mountains almost impracticable. Men and horses were hurled over precipices. The leading battalions had actually begun to retreat; but Napoleon was resolved to overtake the English at all costs. He spoke to the men, and ordered that the members of each section should hold one another by the arm. The cavalry, dismounting, did the same. The staff was formed in similar fashion, the Emperor between Lannes and Duroc, we following with locked arms; and so, in spite of wind, snow, and ice, we proceeded, though it took us four hours to reach the top. Half-way up, the marshals and generals, who wore jackboots, could go no farther. Napoleon, therefore, got hoisted on to a gun, and bestrode it; the marshals and generals did the same; and in this grotesque order they reached the convent at the summit. There the troops were rested and wine served out. The descent, though awkward, was better. At nightfall we reached the market town of San Rafael, and obtained food and quarters there and in the villages round. My wound had re-opened, the snow had got down my neck, and I was wet through; so I passed a wretched night enough.

As we continued our march on the following days we came into milder weather. Rain took the place of frost, and the roads became quagmires. At Tordesillas we came up with some stragglers of the English army, which at our approach was retreating towards the port of Corunna. Anxious to catch it before it could embark, the Emperor forced on the troops, making them do ten or twelve leagues a day. This haste was the cause of a check which Napoleon felt all the more from the fact that it was inflicted on a division of his guard.

When the army was at Villapanda, where it passed the night, the Emperor—who by this time was furious at the protracted pursuit of the English—heard that their rear-guard was only a few leagues from us, at the town of Benavente, beyond the little stream of the Esla. At daybreak he sent forward a column of infantry with cavalry of the guard, under the command of General Lefebvre-Desnouettes, a brave

but somewhat imprudent officer. On reaching with his cavalry the banks of the Esla, the general could see no enemy, and proposed to reconnoitre the town of Benavente, half a league beyond the stream. This was all right; but a picket would have sufficed, for twenty-five men can see as far as two thousand, and if they fall into an ambush the loss is less serious. General Desnouettes should, therefore, have awaited his infantry before plunging recklessly into the Esla. But, without listening to any suggestion, he made the whole regiment of chasseurs ford the river, and advanced towards the town, which he ordered the Mamelukes to search. They found not a soul in the place, a pretty certain sign that the enemy was preparing an ambush. The French general ought in prudence to have drawn back, since he was not in sufficient force to fight a strong rear-guard. Instead of this, Desnouettes pushed steadily forward; but as he was going through the town, four thousand or five thousand English cavalry [1] turned it, covered by the houses in the suburbs, and suddenly charged down upon the chasseurs. These, hastening from the town, made so valiant a defence that they cut a great gap through the English, regained the stream, and recrossed without much loss. But when, on reaching the left bank, the regiment reformed, it was seen that General Desnouettes was no longer present. A messenger came with a flag of truce announcing that the general's horse had been killed in the fight, and he himself was a prisoner of war.[2]

At this moment the Emperor came up. Imagine his wrath at hearing that, not only had his favourite regiment undergone a repulse, but that the commander had remained in the hands of the English! Though much displeased with Desnouettes' imprudence, he proposed to the commander on the other side to exchange him against an officer of the same rank among those detained in France; but General Moore was too proud of being able to show to the English people one of the commanders of the imperial guard of France to agree to this exchange, and, consequently, declined it.

[1] The total number of cavalry fit for duty in Moore's army was 2,278.

[2] Napier, book iv. chap. 4.

General Desnouettes was treated with much kindness, but was sent to London as a trophy, which made Napoleon all the more angry.

In spite of this little victory, the English continued their retreat. We crossed the Esla, and occupied Benavente. From this town to Astorga the distance is not less than fifteen or sixteen leagues, with several streams to be crossed; but the Emperor was in such a hurry to overtake the enemy that he required his army to march this distance in one day, though it was the 31st of December and the days were very short. Seldom have I made such a fatiguing march. An icy rain wetted us to the skin; men and horses sank into the marshy ground. We only advanced with the utmost effort; and as all the bridges had been broken by the English, our men were five or six times compelled to strip, place their arms and clothes on their heads, and go naked through the icy water of the streams.

It is painful to relate that I saw three veteran grenadiers of the guard, unable to march any further, and, unwilling to fall to the rear at the risk of being tortured and massacred by the peasants, blow out their brains with their own muskets. A dark and rainy night added to the fatigue of the troops; the exhausted soldiers lay down in the mud. A great number halted at the village of Bañeza; only the leading companies arrived at Astorga, the rest remaining on the road. It was late at night when the Emperor and Lannes, escorted only by their staffs and some hundred cavalry, entered Astorga. So tired and anxious for shelter and warmth was everyone that the place was scarcely searched. If the enemy had had warning of this and returned on their tracks, they might perhaps have carried off the Emperor; fortunately they were in too great a hurry, and we did not find one of them in the town. Every minute fresh bodies of French troops were coming up; and the safety of the imperial head-quarters was soon secured.

Astorga is a largish town. We quartered ourselves quickly, placing Marshal Lannes in a handsome house near the Emperor. We were wet through, and near enough to

the Asturian mountains to be cold. Our baggage had not yet come up, and the fires which we lighted could not keep the marshal from shivering. I got him to take off all his clothes, roll himself in a woollen rug, and put himself between two mattresses. The houses being well furnished with beds, we all did the like; and in this fashion we saw the year 1808 out.

CHAPTER XL

NEW YEAR'S DAY 1809 was passed at Astorga. The weather continued bad, and it was necessary to allow the army to come together. Food was plentiful, and as there was not an inhabitant in the place we were all the freer to make the most of it. The suicide of the three grenadiers had affected the Emperor keenly; and in spite of rain and wind he visited all the men's quarters, talking to them and restoring their *moral*. All were awaiting the order to start next day in pursuit of the English, when an aide-de-camp from the Minister for War arrived bringing despatches which decided Napoleon to go no further in person. Doubtless it was the news of the hostile movements which Austria was beginning to make, in order to attack the French Empire while Napoleon and a part of the Grand Army were far away in Spain. The Emperor then resolved to return to France to prepare for this new war with the Austrians; but not wishing to lose the chance of chastising the English, he ordered Ney and Soult to pursue. They set out, their troops marching past the Emperor.

The English troops are excellent; but as they are only raised by voluntary enlistment, and as this becomes difficult in time of war, they are forced to admit married men, who are allowed to be accompanied by their families. Consequently the regiments took along with them a great number of women and children; a serious disadvantage which Great Britain has never been able to remedy. Thus, just as the corps of Soult and Ney were marching past the Emperor outside Astorga, cries were heard from a great barn. The door was opened, and it was found to contain 1000 to 1200 English women and children, who, exhausted by the long

march of the previous days through rain, mud, and streams, were unable to keep up with the army and had taken refuge in this place. For forty-eight hours they had lived on raw barley. Most of the women and children were good-looking, in spite of the muddy rags in which they were clad. They flocked round the Emperor, who was touched by their misery and gave them lodging and food in the town; sending a flag of truce to let the English general know that when the weather permitted they would be sent back to him.

Marshal Soult came up with the enemy in the mountains of Leon and beat his rear-guard at Villafranca, where we lost General Colbert and his aide-de-camp Latour-Maubourg. The English army reached the port of Corunna after a hasty march, but a terrible storm made its embarkation very difficult, and it was compelled to give battle to Marshal Soult's troops who were close on its heels. The commander-in-chief, Sir John Moore, was killed, and his army only succeeded in reaching its vessels after immense loss.[1] This event, which the French at first regarded as an advantage, turned out unlucky, for General Moore was replaced by Wellington, who afterwards did us so much harm.

At Astorga my brother, who was on Berthier's staff, was captured by guerrillas when on his way to Madrid with despatches. I shall have more to say about this.

While Soult was pursuing the retreating enemy towards Corunna, the Emperor, accompanied by Marshal Lannes, went back to Valladolid to get on the road to France. He stayed two days in that town, ordering Lannes to go and take command of the two corps which were besieging Saragossa, and after taking that place to rejoin him at Paris. But before leaving us, the Emperor, wishing to show his satisfaction with Lannes' staff, invited the marshal to hand in a scheme of recommendations for promotion with regard to his officers. I was entered for the rank of major and quite expected to get it, especially when I heard that the marshal

[1] English loss at the battle of Corunna about 800, French about 3,000. During the entire advance and retreat Moore lost about 4,000 men, one-sixth of his total force.

on leaving the Emperor's study had asked for me. But my hopes were cruelly overthrown. The marshal said to me kindly that when he was asking for a step for me, he thought he ought also to recommend his old friend Captain Dagusan, but that the Emperor had begged him to choose between Dagusan and me. 'I cannot make up my mind,' said the marshal, 'for the wound which you received at Agreda and your behaviour in that difficult business put the right on your side; but Dagusan is old, and is making his last campaign. Still I would not commit an injustice for the world, and I leave it to you to settle which of the two names I shall have entered on the commission which the Emperor is about to sign.' It was an embarrassing position for me; my heart was very full. However, I answered that he must put M. Dagusan's name on the commission. The marshal embraced me with tears in his eyes, promising that after the siege of Saragossa I should certainly get my step. That evening the marshal called his officers together to announce the promotions. Guéhéneuc had his colonelcy confirmed, Saint-Mars was appointed lieutenant-colonel, Dagusan major, d'Albuquerque and Watteville got the Legion of Honour, de Viry and Labédoyère were captains; I got nothing.

Next day we left Valladolid, riding by short stages to Saragossa. Lannes took the command of the whole besieging force to the number of 30,000 men, who were under the orders of Marshal Mortier, Junot replacing Moncey.

Before the great insurrection which followed the captivity of Ferdinand VII., the town of Saragossa had been unfortified, but on learning what had happened at Bayonne, and the violence which Napoleon was doing to Spain in placing his brother Joseph on the throne, Saragossa gave the signal for resistance. Its population rose as one man; monks, women, and children took up arms. The town was surrounded by immense and solidly-built convents; these were fortified, and guns placed in them. All the houses were loopholed, and the streets barricaded; powder, cannon-balls, and bullets were manufactured, and great stores of food collected. All the inhabitants enrolled themselves, and took as their commander

Count Palafox, one of the colonels of the body-guard and a devoted friend of Ferdinand, whom he had followed to Bayonne, returning to Aragon after the King's arrest. It was during the summer of 1808 that the Emperor heard of the revolt, and the intention to defend Saragossa, but, being still under the delusion to which Murat's despatches had given rise, he regarded the insurrection as a fire of straw which the presence of a few French regiments would put out. Still before employing force he thought to try persuasion. He applied to Prince Pignatelli, the greatest Aragonese noble, who was then in Paris, begging him to use his influence in the province to calm the excitement. Prince Pignatelli accepted this pacific duty, and went to Saragossa. The people ran to meet him, not doubting but that like Palafox he was come to fight the French. But no sooner had he spoken of submission than he was assailed by the mob, who would have hanged him if Palafox had not put him in a dungeon, where he remained eight or nine months.

Meanwhile, several French divisions under General Verdier appeared in June before Saragossa. The fortifications were still incomplete, and an attempt was made to carry the place by assault. But no sooner were our columns in the streets than a murderous fire from windows, towers, roofs, and cellars caused them such losses that they were obliged to retreat. Then our troops surrounded the place, and began a more methodical siege. This would probably have succeeded, had not King Joseph's retreat compelled the army before Saragossa to retreat, also abandoning part of their artillery.

The first siege thus failed, but when our troops had returned to Aragon victorious, the marshal came in 1809 to attack Saragossa afresh. The town was by this time in a much better state of defence, for the fortifications were completed, and all the warlike population of Aragon had thrown itself into the place. The garrison had been further strengthened by a large part of the army of Castaños, which we had beaten at Tudela, so that Saragossa was defended by more than 80,000 men, while the marshal had only 30,000 with which to besiege it. But our officers were excellent,

order and discipline reigned in our ranks, while in the town all was inexperience and confusion. The besieged only agreed on one point—to defend themselves to the death. The peasants were the most determined; they had entered the town with their wives, their children, and even their herds, and each party of them had a quarter of the town or a house assigned to it for its dwelling-place, which they were sworn to defend. The people lived mixed up with their beasts in the most disgusting state of filth, the entrails of slaughtered animals lay about in the courtyards and in the rooms, and the besieged did not even take the trouble to remove the bodies of men who had died in consequence of the epidemic which this carelessness speedily developed. Religious fanaticism and the sacred love of country exalted their courage, and they blindly resigned themselves to the will of God. The Spaniards have preserved much of the Arab character; they are fatalists constantly repeating, 'Lo que ha de ser no puede faltar' ('That which is to be cannot fail'). Accordingly they took no precaution.

To attack such men by assault in a town where every house was a fortress would have been to repeat the mistake committed during the first siege, and to incur heavy losses without a chance of success. Accordingly, Marshal Lannes and General Lacoste, the commanding engineer, adopted a prudent method, which, though tedious, was the best way to bring about the surrender or destruction of the town. They began in the usual way by opening trenches, until the first houses were reached, then the houses were mined and blown up, defenders and all; then the next were mined, and so on. These works, however, involved considerable danger for the French, for as soon as one showed himself he was a mark to musket-shots from the Spaniards in the neighbouring buildings. General Lacoste fell in this way, at the moment when he was taking his place in front of a window to examine the interior of the town. Such was the determination of the Spaniards that while a house was being mined, and the dull sound of the rammer warned them that death was at hand, not one left the house which he had sworn to defend. We

could hear them singing litanies, then at the moment when the walls flew into the air, and fell back with a crash, crushing the greater part of them, those who had escaped would collect about the ruins, and sheltering themselves behind the slightest cover would recommence their sharpshooting. Our soldiers, however, warned of the moment when the mine was going off, held themselves in readiness, and no sooner had the explosion taken place than they dashed on to the ruins, and, after killing all whom they found, established themselves behind bits of wall, threw up entrenchments with furniture and beams, and in the middle of the ruins constructed passages for the sappers who were going to mine the next house. In this way a good third of the town was destroyed, and the passages established among the ruins formed an inextricable labyrinth, through which one could only find one's way by the help of stakes which the engineer officers placed. Besides the mines, the French used artillery freely, and threw 11,000 shells into the town.

In spite of all Saragossa still held out. In vain did the marshal, touched by the heroism of the defence, send a flag of truce to propose a capitulation. It was refused, and the siege continued. The huge fortified convents could not be destroyed, like the houses, by mining; we, therefore, merely blew up a piece of their thick walls, and when the breach was made sent forward a column to the assault. The besieged would flock to the defence, and in the terrible fighting which resulted from these attacks we suffered our principal losses.

The best fortified convents were those of the Inquisition and of Santa Engracia. A mine had just been completed under the latter when the marshal, sending for me in the middle of the night, told me that in order to hasten my promotion to the rank of major he designed for me a most important duty. 'At daybreak,' said he, 'the mine which is to breach the wall of Santa Engracia will be fired. Eight companies of genadiers are to assault; I have given orders that the captains should be chosen from those junior to you; I give you the command of the column. Carry the convent, and I feel certain that one of the first messengers from Paris

will bring your commission as major.' I accepted with gratitude, though suffering at the moment a good deal from my wound. The flesh in cicatrising had formed a lump which prevented me from wearing military headgear, so Dr. Assalagny, the surgeon-major of the chasseurs, had reduced it with lunar caustic. This painful operation had been performed the day before; I had been feverish all night, and consequently was not in very good condition for leading an assault. No matter; there was no room for hesitation, and I can admit, too, that I was exceedingly proud of the command entrusted to me. Eight companies of grenadiers to a mere captain was magnificent.

I hastened to get ready, and as day dawned I went to the trenches. There I found General Rasout, who, after having handed over the command of the grenadiers to me, observed that, as the mine could not be fired for an hour, I should do well to use this time in examining the wall which was to be blown up, and in calculating the width of the resulting breach so as to arrange my attack. I started, with an adjutant of engineers to show me the way, through the ruins of a whole quarter which had already been thrown down. Finally, I reached the foot of the convent wall where the territory conquered by us came to an end. I found myself in a little court; a light infantry picket, which occupied a sort of cellar hard by, had a sentry in this court, who was sheltered from musket-shots by a heap of planks and doors. The engineer officer, showing me a thick wall in front of us, said that was the one which was to be blown up. In one of the corners of the court whence a pump had been torn away, some stones had fallen out, and left a gap. The sentry showed me that by stooping down one could see through this opening the legs of a stormy force of the enemy posted in the convent garden. In order to verify his statement and notice the lie of the ground on which I was going to fight, I stooped down. At that moment a Spaniard posted on the tower of Santa Engracia fired a shot at me, and I fell on the stones.

I felt no pain at first, and thought that the adjutant standing by me had inadvertently given me a push. Pre-

sently, however, the blood flowed copiously; I had got a bullet in the left side very near the heart. The adjutant helped me to rise, and we went into the cellar where the soldiers were. I was losing so much blood that I was on the point of fainting. There were no stretchers, so the soldiers passed a musket under my arms, another under my knees, and thus carried me through the thousand-and-one passages which had been made through the débris of this quarter to the place where I had left General Rasout. There I recovered my senses. The general wished to have me attended to, but I preferred to be under Dr. Assalagny, so, pressing my handkerchief on the wound, I had myself taken to Marshal Lannes' headquarters, a cannon-shot from the town.

When they saw me arrive, all covered with blood, carried by soldiers, one of whom was supporting my head, the marshal and my comrades thought I was dead. Dr. Assalagny assured them to the contrary, and hastened to dress my wound. The difficulty was where to put me, for, as all the furniture of the establishment had been burnt during the siege, there was not a bed in the place. We used to sleep on the bricks wherewith the rooms were paved. The marshal and all my comrades at once gave their cloaks: these were piled up, and I was laid on them. The doctor examined my wound, and found that I had been struck by a projectile which must have been flat because it had passed between two ribs without breaking them, which an ordinary bullet would not have done. To find the object Assalagny put a probe into the wound, but when he found nothing his face grew anxious. Finding that I complained of severe pain in the loins, he turned me on my face, and examined my back. Hardly had he touched the spot where the ribs are connected with the spine than I involuntarily gave a cry. The projectile was there. Assalagny then took a knife, made a large incision, perceived a metallic body showing between two ribs and tried to extract it with the forceps. He did not, however, succeed, though his violent efforts lifted me up, until he made one of my comrades sit on my shoulders, and another on my legs. At length he succeeded in extracting a lead bullet of

the largest calibre. The Spaniards had hammered it flat till it had the shape of a half-crown, a cross was scratched on each face, and small notches all round gave it the appearance of the wheel of a watch. It was these teeth which had caught in the muscles, and rendered the extraction so difficult. Thus crushed out, the ball presented too large a surface to enter a musket, and must have been fired from a blunderbus. Striking edgewise, it had acted like a cutting instrument, passed between two ribs, and travelled round the interior of the chest to make its exit in the same way as its entry, fortunately preserving sufficient force to make its way through the muscles of the back. The marshal, wishing to let the Emperor know with what fanatical determination the inhabitants of Saragossa were defending themselves, sent him the bullet extracted from my body. Napoleon, after examining it, had it brought to my mother, at the same time announcing to her that I was about to be promoted to major.

Assalagny was one of the first surgeons of the day, and, thanks to him, my wound, which might have been mortal, was a case of rapid cure. The marshal had a folding bedstead which he took on campaign. This he lent me, with mattress and sheets; my valise served me for pillow, my cloak for blankets. Still, I was not well off, for my room had neither door nor window, and wind and rain entered. The ground floor of the house, too, was used for a hospital, the sounds and odours of which reached my room; more than two hundred sutlers had set up their booths round the headquarters. The camp was close by; so that there was eternal singing, shouting, drumming, and the bass to this fiendish concert was supplied by numerous cannon, booming night and day. I got no sleep; but at the end of a fortnight my vigorous constitution got the upper hand, and I was able to leave my bed.

The climate being mild, I was also able to take short walks, leaning on the arm of Dr. Assalagny or my friend, de Viry; but their duties did not allow of their staying with me long, and I suffered much from ennui. One day my servant

came in to say that an old hussar, with tears streaming down his face, was asking to see me. As you will guess, it was my old tutor, Sergeant Pertelay. His regiment had just come to Spain, and hearing that I had been wounded, he came straight to me. I was glad to see the good man again, and gave him a cordial greeting. After this he often came to visit me, and divert me by his interminable yarns and the quaint advice which he still thought himself entitled to give me. My convalescence did not last long, and by March 15 I was nearly well, though weak.

Typhus, famine, fire, and sword had destroyed nearly a third of the inhabitants and garrison of Saragossa, and still no thought of surrender entered the minds of the survivors. The principal forts had been taken, and the mines had destroyed a very large portion of the town. The monks had persuaded the poor folk that the French would massacre them, and none dared come out. Good luck and Lannes' kindness at last put an end to this memorable siege. On March 20 the French carried a nunnery by assault. Besides the nuns, they found three hundred women of all classes who had taken refuge in the church. They were treated with respect, and brought to the marshal. The poor creatures, having been surrounded for several days, had received no food, and were famishing. Lannes led them himself to the camp market, where, summoning the carabiniers, he ordered them to bring food for the women, making himself responsible for payment. Nor did his generosity stop there; he had them all taken back to Saragossa. On their return the inhabitants, who had followed their movements from roofs and towers, rushed forward to hear their adventures. They all spoke well of the French marshal and soldiers, and from that moment the excitement subsided and a surrender was decided upon. That evening Saragossa capitulated.

Lannes' first condition was, that Prince Fuentes-Pignatelli should be given up to him alive. The poor man arrived escorted by a savage-looking gaoler with pistols in his sash, who had the impudence to bring him to the marshal's room, demanding a receipt from the hand of the French commander-

in-chief. The marshal had him turned out; but as the man would not go without his receipt, Labédoyère, never very patient, lost his temper, and literally kicked him downstairs. As for Prince Pignatelli, he was indeed a painful sight, owing to his sufferings in prison. He was devoured by fever, and we had not a bed to offer him; for, as I have said, the marshal was lodging in a house utterly unfurnished, the sole advantage of which was that it lay near the point of attack. Junot meanwhile, being less conscientious, had established himself a league away in a rich convent, where he lived very comfortably. He offered hospitality to the prince, who, fatally for himself, accepted it. Junot gave him such a 'blow-out' that his stomach, undermined by prison diet, gave way under the sudden change, and Prince Pignatelli died just as he was restored to freedom and happiness. He left an income of more than 900,000 francs to a collateral relation who had hardly a farthing.

When a place capitulates it is usual for the officers to retain their swords. This practice was followed at Saragossa, except in the case of the governor, Palafox, touching whom the marshal had received special instructions from the Emperor, on the following grounds :—

Count Palafox, a devoted friend of Ferdinand, had followed him to Bayonne. Thrown into consternation by the abdication of that prince and his father, the Spanish grandees summoned by Napoleon to a national assembly, finding themselves in France and in Napoleon's power, for the most part recognised Joseph as their king. Palafox, it appears, under the same pressure, did the same; but hardly had he returned to Spain when he promptly protested against the moral violence which, he asserted, had been used towards him, and hastened to put himself at the head of the insurgents at Saragossa. The Emperor regarded this conduct as perfidious, and ordered that, when the town was taken, Count Palafox should be treated, not as a prisoner of war, but as a state prisoner, and accordingly disarmed and sent to prison at Vincennes. Marshal Lannes, therefore, found himself under the necessity of sending an officer to arrest the governor and demand his

sword. He entrusted the duty to d'Albuquerque, who found it all the more painful that he was not only a Spaniard, but a relation and old friend of Palafox's. I have never been able to divine the marshal's motive in selecting him for such a duty. D'Albuquerque, however, had to obey, and entered Saragossa more dead than alive. He presented himself to Palafox, who handed him his sword, saying, with a noble pride: 'If your ancestors, the famous d'Albuquerques, could return to life, there is not one of them who would not sooner be in the place of the prisoner who is surrendering this sword, covered with honour, than in that of the renegade who is receiving it on behalf of the enemies of his country.' Poor d'Albuquerque, terrified and almost fainting, had to lean against a piece of furniture to avoid falling. The scene was related to us by Captain Pasqual, who, having been ordered to take charge of Palafox after his arrest, was present at the interview. Count Palafox remained in France till 1814.

How strange are human affairs! Palafox having been proclaimed governor of Saragossa when the insurrection broke out, has received both from fame and history the credit of the heroic defence. He really contributed little to it, for he fell ill early in the siege, and handed over the command to General Saint-Marc, a Belgian in the Spanish service, and it was he who sustained all our attacks with such remarkable courage and ability. But as he was a foreigner, Spanish pride assigned all the glory of the defence to Palafox, whose name will go down to posterity, while that of the brave and ardent General Saint-Marc is mentioned in no history, and remains forgotten.[1]

The garrison, 40,000 in number, were forwarded to France as prisoners of war, but two-thirds of them escaped and recommenced the slaughter of Frenchmen as members of guerrilla bands. They had carried away the germs of typhus, and died later. The ruined streets of the city were a perfect charnel-house, and the contagion spread to the French troops who formed the new garrison.

[1] Napier's estimate of Palafox is even lower.

CHAPTER XLI

WITH the capture of Saragossa, Marshal Lannes' work was done, and he started to rejoin the Emperor at Paris and accompany him into Germany. We rode the distance from Aragon to Bidassoa. The celebrated guerilla Mina attacked our escort in the Pyrenees near Pampeluna, and a servant of the marshal's who acted as outrider was killed. At Saint-Jean de Luz the marshal found his carriage and offered places in it to Saint-Mars, Le Couteulx, and myself. I sold my horses, and de Viry took my servant back. One of the marshal's valets having vainly tried to act as outrider, and there being no postilions, we three offered to do three stages apiece. I admit that this riding post cost me a good deal, hardly healed as I was of my two wounds, but I reckoned on my youth and my strong constitution. I began my duties on the darkest of nights and under a violent storm, and besides, as I was not preceded by a postilion as the outrider who carries despatches usually is, I got into bad places, and rode my horse into holes; the carriage was at my heels, I did not know the position of the post-houses, which are hard to find at night and in such weather. To finish my misfortunes, I had to wait for some time for the ferry-boat across the Adour at Peyrehorade. I took cold and was shivering, and in a good deal of pain from my wound when I took my place in the carriage. You may see from these details that an aide-de-camp's life is not all rosewater. We stayed forty-eight hours at Lectoure, where the marshal had a comfortable house in the buildings of the old bishop's palace. Then we continued our journey towards Paris. As the marshal travelled night and day and could not bear the smell of cooked food, we were obliged to fast pretty well for six stages, and then only

to eat as we galloped. I was, therefore, much surprised when one evening the marshal begged me to stop at Pétignac or Le Roulet, and to announce that he would halt an hour for supper. I was especially surprised when I saw that the house to which I was directed was not an inn; but when the marshal's coming was announced, the inhabitants displayed the most lively joy, laid the table, prepared a succulent repast, and flew out to meet the carriage. The marshal, with tears in his eyes, kissed them all round, including the smallest brats, and showed every sign of the warmest friendship towards the postmaster. After dinner he bade Saint-Mars take out of his pocket-book a superb gold watch and a chain of the same metal clasped with a big diamond, presented these to the postmaster and his wife, gave 300 or 400 francs to the maids, and departed after most tender embraces.

I supposed that this family were the marshal's relations, but when we were in the carriage he said to us, 'You are doubtless astonished at the interest I take in these good people, but the husband did me a great service, for he saved my life in Syria.' Then the marshal related to us how, when he was a general of division at Acre, he was leading an assault against the tower when he received a bullet through his neck, and fell senseless. His soldiers, deeming him dead, were retiring in disorder before thousands of Turks, who cut off the heads of such as they could catch and placed them on the points of the palisades. A brave captain appealed to the men to bring away the body of their general, carried him off, and, when exhausted, dragged him by one leg to the back of the trenches. The soil being sandy, the general's head received no injury, and his senses being restored by the shaking he was tended by Larrey, who quite brought him back to life. The captain having been severely wounded left the army with a small pension, and married a wife without much money. But the marshal became a second Providence for the family. He purchased for them a postmastership, some fields, some horses, and a house, and had the eldest son educated at his own expense until the others were

igh to leave their parents. So naturally these good vere as grateful to the marshal, as he to his rescuer. -captain no doubt lost a good deal when Marshal died. He never saw him again after that day.

We continued our journey, with the cold always increasing, which made the way from Orleans to Paris wretched enough. I arrived on April 2, terribly tired and in much pain. The joy with which I met my mother again was mingled with bitter, for she had just heard that my brother had been taken prisoner by Spanish guerrillas, and I was about to start on a new campaign.

The moment I got to Paris the marshal took me to the minister of war to find out what he had done for me. My commission as major lacked only the Emperor's signature, but Napoleon being much occupied with the movements of the Austrian army did not ask the minister for the document, which was all ready, and made no promotion. An evil fate pursued me.

The capital was much excited. The English, seeing us occupied in Spain, thought that the moment had come to raise the whole North of Europe against Napoleon. The plan was premature, for the Emperor still could dispose of vast influence and a strong force in Germany. Prussia did not dare to stir; the princes of the Germanic Confederation placed their armies at the service of Napoleon; even Russia sent a corps of 25,000 men. In spite of this, the Austrians in the pay of England had just declared war, and their armies were advancing on our ally, Bavaria. The Emperor was making ready to go to Germany, whither Lannes was to follow him. All the carriages had been reserved by the hundreds of generals and others, and I was in a difficulty, for both the Emperor and the marshal were to leave Paris on April 13, and I had orders to start a day before them. I had therefore to make up my mind to ride post once more. Luckily, a week's rest had reduced the irritation of the wound in my side. That in my forehead was healed over, and I was careful to wear a cocked hat instead of my heavy busby. My servant, Woirland, went with me, but being a

very bad rider, he often fell off, only saying, as he got up again, 'How tough you are! Oh, yes; you are tough!'

In forty-eight hours I covered the hundred and twenty leagues between Paris and Strasburg, in spite of rain and snow. Woirland could do no more; we had to change our mode of travelling. Besides, I knew that in Germany nobody posted on horseback, and we were still only half-way to Augsburg, our rendezvous. At last I found a carriage, and reached Augsburg, where I joined my comrades. The Emperor, the marshal, and nearly all the troops were already in the field. I managed to buy a horse in the town. I exchanged my carriage for another, and we set off in the saddle. In the course of a few weeks we had sold our horses cheap, and spent a great deal of money—all to go and meet the bullets which were to take away many of our lives. You may call the feeling which urged us love of glory, or perhaps madness; it was an imperious master, and we marched without looking back.

We reached head-quarters on April 20, during the action at Abensberg. Marshal Lannes complimented us on our zeal, and sent us off at once into the thick of the fire to bear his orders. The Austrians, under the Archduke Charles, withdrew behind the Danube at Landshut, beyond the Iser, as usual omitting to destroy the bridges. Napoleon attacked Landshut with the infantry. They crossed the bridge twice under a hail of bullets, but on reaching the other side were stopped by a huge gate, which the enemy's rear-guard was defending with a brisk fire from the walls of the town. Twice our columns were repulsed with loss, but the Emperor, who set very much by the capture of Landshut, that he might cross the Iser before the archduke could organise his resistance more thoroughly, ordered a third attack. The troops told off for this were getting ready to march when Napoleon, seeing his aide-de-camp, General Mouton, who was coming to report the result of a mission which he had given him that morning, said, 'You come just in time; put yourself at the head of that column, and carry the town of Landshut.' So perilous a task set him without notice would

have astonished a man less brave than General Mouton. He was in no way perturbed by it. Dismounting and drawing his sword, he ordered the charge to be sounded. He was the first to dash over the bridge at the head of the grenadiers. Finding the gate of Landshut in his way, he had it broken down with hatchets, put all who resisted to the sword, took the town, and came calmly back to the Emperor with his report of the mission which he had undertaken in the morning. Strangely enough, during their conversation not a word was said about the capture of Landshut, and the Emperor never spoke of it to General Mouton; but after the campaign he sent him a remarkable picture by Hersant, in which the general is represented marching to the attack of the place at the head of his column. This keepsake from Napoleon was worth more than the highest eulogies.

CHAPTER XLII

Crossing the Iser, the French army marched on Eckmühi, where the bulk of the Austrian army was massed. The Emperor and Marshal Lannes passed the night at Landshut; a battle on the following day appeared imminent. The town and neighbourhood were full of troops. In every direction staff officers were carrying orders and returning. My comrades and I were fully occupied, and as we only had very second-rate horses, picked up anyhow, and they were pretty thoroughly tired, we foresaw that it would be difficult for us to perform our duties satisfactorily in the battle of the morrow.

When I came in about ten o'clock, on returning from an errand three or four leagues from Landshut, Marshal Lannes gave me an order to carry to General Gudin. His division being a long way off, I was to remain with him till the marshal arrived in the field. This was embarrassing, for the horse which I had been riding was knocked up, the marshal had not one to lend me, and there was no French cavalry at Landshut which might be required to supply me with one. I could not go to the Emperor's quarters to tell the marshal that I was practically horseless, yet without a good steed how was I to carry an order on which perhaps the safety of the army depended? I got out of the difficulty by what I admit was a wicked act, but perhaps excusable in the circumstances. You shall decide. I called my servant, Woirland, a practised 'snapper-up of unconsidered trifles,' who had served his apprenticeship in Humbert's Black Legion, and was never at a loss. I imparted my difficulty to him, and bade him procure me a horse at any price; I simply must have one. 'You shall have it,' said he, and leaving the town he made for the camp

of the Wurtemberg cavalry. The men were all asleep, sentries and all; Woirland inspected the horses at his ease, saw one that he liked, unfastened it, and, at the risk of getting knocked on the head if anyone saw him, he brought it out of the camp, turned everything off its back, came back to the town, put my saddle on it, and informed me that it was all ready. Now the horses of the Wurtemberg cavalry are marked on the near thigh with a pair of stag's horns, so I could easily recognise whence the new mount, which my Figaro had brought me, was procured. He did not deny it; the horse, to put it plainly, had been stolen. But see how a difficult situation stretches the conscience! To silence mine, I said to myself: 'If I do not take this animal, which belongs to the King of Wurtemberg, it is impossible for me to bear to General Gudin the orders which he has got to execute at daybreak. This may involve the loss of a battle, and cost the King of Wurtemberg his crown. Therefore, in making use of a horse from his army I am indirectly doing him a service. Besides, as the Emperor gave him a kingdom, he may very well lend the Emperor a horse, which I shall return when I have made use of it to their joint advantage.' Whether this reasoning would satisfy a casuist I know not, but matters were pressing; I leapt into the saddle, and galloped off. Master Woirland knew his business, it was an excellent horse. The only thing which disturbed me was that the infernal pair of horns stamped on its thigh, showing whence it came, exposed me to the chance of having it claimed by some Wurtemberg officer. Finally, at daybreak, I reached General Gudin, just as his troops were marching. I went with him until the Emperor and Marshal Lannes overtook us with the main body. The battle was fought, victory was never for a moment in doubt. Marshal Davout distinguished himself, earning the title which was given him later on of Prince of Eckmühl.

My horse behaved splendidly, but his last day had come. In the hottest of the action, Marshal Lannes sent one of his least experienced aides-de-camp to General Saint-Sulpice with orders to charge with his cuirassiers a brigade of the

enemy's cavalry. The aide-de-camp explained matters so badly that the general was going off in quite a different direction, and the marshal perceiving this told me to place myself at the head of the division, and to guide it towards the enemy by the high road which runs through the village of Eckmühl. While Lannes was explaining his wishes to me, studying a map which he, I, and General Cervoni were holding each by one side, a cannon-ball came across it, and threw General Cervoni stone dead against the marshal's shoulder. He was covered with the blood of his friend, who had come from Corsica only the day before on purpose to make this campaign. Deeply grieved as he was, he continued to give me his orders with perfect clearness, and I hastened to General Saint-Sulpice, and rode beside him at the head of the cuirassiers towards Eckmühl.

The village was occupied by a regiment of Croats, who instead of firing upon us out of the windows where they were out of reach of our sabres, bravely but stupidly left their excellent position, and came down into the street, intending to form close column, and stop our squadrons with their bayonets. The French cuirassiers gave them no time for this; they came up so quickly that the Croats, caught in disarray just as they were coming out of the houses, were driven in and sabred, and soon the street was piled with their bodies. They did not, however, yield without a valiant defence. One battalion especially made a vigorous resistance, and my horse having received in the scuffle the point of a bayonet in his heart went forward a few steps, and fell dead against a corner stone in such wise that one of my legs was caught under the poor animal's body, and my knee pressed against the stone, so that I was quite unable to move. Woe to the dismounted horseman in such cases! No one stops to pick him up, nor, indeed, could he if he would; so the first regiment of our cuirassiers, after cutting down all the Croats who did not lay down their arms promptly, continued the charge, and passed through the village followed by the whole division at a gallop.

Horses, unless very tired, seldom set their feet on the

body of a man lying on the ground. Thus the whole division of cuirassiers passed over me without doing the slightest injury. Still, I could not free myself, and my situation became more unpleasant when I foresaw that our cuirassiers would be repulsed and driven back through the village by a very strong force of the enemy's cavalry, which I had seen before the charge on the further side of Eckmühl. I was afraid that the Austrian troopers would serve me out by way of revenging the Croats. During the moment of quiet which succeeded the uproar of the street fighting and the passage of cavalry, I perceived, at no great distance two grenadiers of the enemy's who had laid aside their pieces, and were helping their wounded comrades to rise. I beckoned them to come to me and assist me in getting my leg free; whether from good nature or from fear that I might have them killed, although at that moment I had no Frenchmen at my orders, they obeyed. They knew that our cuirassiers were in front, and probably regarded themselves as prisoners; anyhow, these kind of soldiers do not reflect much. They came up, and I admit that when I saw one of them pull from his pocket a knife to cut the leather of the stirrup which held my foot under the horse, I was afraid that the fancy might seize him of sticking it, as he might quite safely have done, into me. But he was honest, and with the help of his comrade succeeded in setting me on my feet. I made them take my saddle and bridle, and left Eckmühl to rejoin our infantry, which was still outside.

The two Croats followed me in the most docile manner, and it was lucky for them they did, for hardly were we out of the village when a fearful noise arose behind us. It was caused by the return of our squadrons, who, as I expected, were driven back by the enemy's superior force, and these in their turn were sabring all who lagged behind.

Our cuirassiers, furious at their repulse, tried as they galloped past me to run through the Croats who were carrying my saddle. The men had helped me; I objected, therefore, to their being killed, and ordered them by signs to lie down in a ditch, where the sabres could not reach them. I should

have put myself there if I had not observed at the head of the Austrian force some Uhlans, who could easily have reached me with their lances. Luckily for us, help came to Saint-Sulpice's division before it had gone 300 or 400 paces, for, seeing it in retreat, the Emperor sent forward two divisions of cavalry, which were rapidly hastening to meet us. But short as was the distance which I had to traverse to escape the Austrian lances, it was a long way for a dismounted man. Two cuirassiers took me between them, and each giving me a hand carried me along so well that with the help of long strides, I could keep up for a couple of minutes with their galloping horses. This was all that mattered, the supports came up promptly, the enemy stayed their pursuit and were even driven back beyond Eckmühl, which our troops re-occupied. I was glad to be at the end of my more than double-quick march, for I was out of breath, and could not have kept it up. I had a good opportunity of observing how ill-suited for war are such big and heavy boots as our cuirassiers then wore. A young officer of the squadron which saved me had his horse killed, and two of his men stretched out their hands to help him to run as I had done, but although he was tall and slight and far more active than I, his stiff and heavy foot-gear prevented him from moving his legs quickly enough to keep up with the horses. He was compelled to let go of the helping hands, and the next time we saw the ground which we had so rapidly crossed, we found the lieutenant killed by the stroke of a lance. We could see that he had been trying to get rid of his large boots, one of which was pulled half off. My little hussar boots, being light and flexible, had been no hindrance to me.

Hoping to recover my saddle and bridle, I returned to the ditch, where I had made the two Croats hide, and found them quietly lying there. Several charges had taken place across their lair without their receiving the least scratch. I rewarded them, and marched them in front of me to the hillock, where the Emperor and Marshal Lannes were, knowing well that my chief would not wish to lose my services during the rest of the battle, and would make one of the regiments which were

near him lend me a horse. He gave orders accordingly, but as at the moment there were none but cuirassiers in the neighbourhood, they brought me an immense heavy animal, quite unfit to carry an aide-de-camp rapidly from point to point. The marshal having remarked this, a colonel of Wurtemberg Light Horse, who happened to be behind the Emperor, eager to do a polite thing, bade his orderly dismount; and there I was again on an excellent horse, marked with the stag's horns. The colonel's kindness renewed, in some measure, my remorse for the crime I had committed in the morning, but I silenced it by repeating my somewhat Jesuitical arguments. The joke of the thing was that, as I was bearing an order to the reserve, I fell in with my servant, Woirland, who, coming up to give me some provisions out of his always well-filled saddle-bags, exclaimed, 'Why, that horse is the devil! He was grey this morning, and now he's black!'

The battle of Eckmühl began and lasted all day on broken ground, covered with small hills and copse-wood; but, as one advances towards the Danube, the country grows level and bare until one enters the immense plain which extends to Ratisbon. The Austrian cavalry is one of the best in Europe, but under the plea that they must reserve it to cover their retreat in the event of their being beaten, they employ it not at all, or very little, during the fight. This leads to their defeat, and compels a retreat which they might have avoided. Then, however, their cavalry does cover their retrograde movement admirably. This happened at Eckmühl,[1] for, as soon as the Archduke Charles saw that the battle was lost, and that his infantry, driven out of the hilly ground, were exposed to the French squadrons, while making it difficult to retreat in the plain, he caused the whole of his cavalry to take the offensive. They came bravely forward to check us, while the Austrian infantry, artillery, and baggage were retiring upon Ratisbon. The Emperor, on his side, advanced our hussars and chasseurs, supported by the strong brigades of Saint-Sulpice and

[1] And at Königgrätz, in 1866.

Nansouty, to which the enemy opposed two brigades of the same arm. The light cavalry on both sides drew off promptly to the flank, to avoid being crushed by these formidable steel-clad masses, who advanced rapidly upon each other, met with a shock, penetrated each other, and became one immense mêlée. A faint twilight, and the beams of a rising moon, alone gave light for this terrible and majestic combat. The shouts of the fighters were drowned by the sound of repeated blows of heavy sabres upon thousands of helmets and cuirasses, from which the sparks flew in numbers. Austrians and French both wished to remain masters of the field. Courage, tenacity, and strength were well matched, but the defensive arms were unequal, for the Austrian cuirasses only covered them in front, and gave no protection to the back in a crowd. In this way, the French troopers, who, having double cuirasses and no fear of being wounded from behind, had only to think of thrusting, were able to give point at the enemy's backs, and slew a great many of them with small loss to themselves. This unequal fight lasted some minutes; finally the Austrians, with immense loss in killed and wounded, were compelled, for all their bravery, to abandon the ground. When they had wheeled about, they understood still better what a disadvantage it is not to have a cuirass behind as well as in front. The fight became a butchery, as our cuirassiers pursued the enemy, and for the space of half a league the ground was piled with killed and wounded cuirassiers. Few would have escaped, had not our men stayed to charge some battalions of Hungarian grenadiers, which they broke up and captured almost entirely. This fight settled a question which had been long debated, as to the necessity of double cuirasses, for the proportion of Austrians wounded and killed amounted respectively to eight and thirteen for one Frenchman.

After this terrible charge, the enemy, unable to resist any further, fled in the greatest disorder, briskly pursued along the road—fugitives pell-mell with victors. Marshal Lannes proposed to the Emperor that he should profit by the rout of the Austrians to destroy their army completely, hurling

it back on the Danube, and entering Ratisbon with it. But the other marshals pointed out that we were still three leagues from that place, that our infantry was weary, and that it would be dangerous to risk a night engagement against an enemy which had shown such obstinate courage. The Emperor therefore ordered the pursuit to cease, and the army bivouacked in the plain. The Austrians admitted a loss of 5,000 killed, and 15,000 prisoners, twelve colours, and sixteen guns; of ours they only captured a few men, and killed 1,500. In such disorder did the enemy retreat that in the night one of their cavalry regiments was straying about our camp, unable to find any line of retreat open. Colonel Guéhéneuc, bearing an order, stumbled upon this force, and the commander, after having seized M. Guéhéneuc, said, 'You were my prisoner, now I am yours,' and we saw Guéhéneuc come up, much to the Emperor's amusement, and the Austrian regiment which had surrendered to him.

After such a success, captured horses were, as you may suppose, plentiful in the camp. I bought three capital animals for a few louis, and being thus completely mounted for the rest of the campaign I gave up the two screws which I had previously acquired, and returned to the Wurtembergers the horse which they had lent me.

CHAPTER XLIII

THE archduke had made use of the darkness to reach Ratisbon, where the bridge enabled him to transport his baggage and the greater part of his army to the left bank of the Danube. Then we were able to perceive the extent of the Emperor's foresight in having at the outset of the campaign ordered Davout—coming up from Hamburg and Hanover, with a view of joining the Grand Army on the right bank of the Danube—to secure possession of Ratisbon and his bridge by leaving a regiment there. Davout had, accordingly, left the 65th of the line, commanded by a relative of his, Colonel Coutard, wishing to give him an opportunity of distinguishing himself. But Coutard could not hold the place, and, after some hours' fighting, surrendered it to the Austrians, who, but for the means of retreat afforded by the bridge, would have been compelled to lay down their arms. Colonel Coutard having stipulated for the return to France of himself and his officers alone, the Emperor decreed that in future the officers of a corps which had been compelled to capitulate should share the fate of their men, hoping thereby to encourage commanders to resist more stubbornly.

The Emperor could not, however, march on to Vienna until Ratisbon was retaken, otherwise, as soon as he had moved forward, the archduke would have crossed the Danube by the bridge, and, bringing his army back to the right bank, would have attacked us in rear. We had then, at all costs, to take possession of the place. Marshal Lannes was charged with this difficult duty. The enemy had 6,000 men in Ratisbon, whom they could reinforce to any extent by help of the bridge; many guns were in position on the ramparts, and the parapet was garnished with infantry. The fortifica-

tions of Ratisbon were old and bad, the ditches were dry and used as kitchen gardens. Still, although the means of defence were not such as could have resisted a regular siege, the town was in a position—especially as the garrison could communicate with an army of more than 80,000 men—to repel an assault. To get into the place it was necessary to descend a deep ditch with the help of ladders, cross it under fire from the enemy, and scale the rampart, the angles of which were commanded by a flanking fire.

The Emperor, having dismounted, took up his position on a hillock a short cannon-shot from the town. Having noticed near the Straubing gate a house which had imprudently been built against the rampart, he sent forward some twelve-pounders and howitzers, and ordering them to concentrate their fire upon this house, so that its ruins, falling into the ditch, might partially fill it, and form at the foot of the wall an incline by which our troops might mount to the assault. While the artillery was executing this order, Lannes brought Morand's division close up to the promenade which goes round the town; and, in order to shelter his troops from the enemy's fire, up to the last moment he placed them in rear of a large stone store-house, which appeared to have been placed there on purpose to aid our undertaking. Carts laden with ladders taken from the neighbouring villages were brought up to this point, where perfect protection was obtained against the Austrian projectiles. While waiting till everything was ready, Marshal Lannes had gone back to the Emperor to receive his final orders. As they were chatting, a bullet—fired, in all probability, from one of the long-range Tyrolese rifles—struck Napoleon on the right ankle. The pain was at first so sharp that the Emperor had to lean upon Lannes, but Dr. Larrey, who quickly arrived, declared that the wound was trifling. If it had been severe enough to require an operation, the event would certainly have been considered a great misfortune for France; yet it might perhaps have spared her many calamities. However, the report that the Emperor had been wounded spread through the army. Officers and men ran up from all sides; in a moment Napoleon was surrounded by

thousands of men, in spite of the fire which the enemy's guns concentrated on the vast group. The Emperor, wishing to withdraw his troops from this useless danger, and to calm the anxiety of the more distant corps, who were getting unsteady in their desire to come and see what was the matter, mounted his horse the instant his wound was dressed, and rode down the front of the whole line, amid loud cheers.

It was at this extempore review held in presence of the enemy that Napoleon first granted gratuities to private soldiers, appointing them knights of the Empire and members, at the same time, of the Legion of Honour. The regimental commanders recommended, but the Emperor also allowed soldiers who thought they had claims to come and represent them before him; then he decided upon them by himself. Now it befell that an old grenadier who had made the campaigns of Italy and Egypt, not hearing his name called, came up, and, in a calm tone of voice, asked for the Cross. 'But, said Napoleon, 'what have you done to deserve it?' 'It was I, sir, who, in the desert of Joppa, when it was so terribly hot, gave you a water-melon.' 'I thank you for it again; but the gift of the fruit is hardly worth the Cross of the Legion of Honour.' Then the grenadier, who up till then had been as cool as ice, working himself up into a frenzy, shouted, with the utmost volubility, 'Well, and don't you reckon seven wounds received at the bridge of Arcola, at Lodi and Castiglione, at the Pyramids, at Acre, Austerlitz, Friedland; eleven campaigns in Italy, Egypt, Austria, Prussia, Poland ——' but the Emperor cut him short, laughing, and mimicking his excited manner, cried: 'There, there—how you work yourself up when you come to the essential point! That is where you ought to have begun; it is worth much more than your melon. I make you a knight of the Empire, with a pension of 1,200 francs. Does that satisfy you?' 'But, your majesty, I prefer the Cross.' 'You have both one and the other, since I make you knight.' 'Well, I would rather have the Cross.' The worthy grenadier could not be moved from that point, and it took all manner of trouble to make him understand that the title of knight of the Empire carried

with it the Legion of Honour. He was not appeased on this point until the Emperor had fastened the decoration on his breast, and he seemed to think a great deal more of this than of his annuity of 1,200 francs. It was by familiarities of this kind that the Emperor made the soldiers adore him, but it was a means that was only available to a commander whom frequent victories had made illustrious; any other general would have injured his reputation by it.

As soon as Lannes gave notice that all was ready for the assault, we returned towards Ratisbon, the Emperor meanwhile going back to his hillock to witness the operations. The various army corps round him awaited events in silence. Our artillery had completely destroyed the house by the rampart, and its fragments falling into the ditch had made a slope practicable enough, but not reaching higher than to ten or twelve feet from the top of the wall; to reach this, therefore, ladders had to be placed on the rubbish no less than to descend into the ditch. On reaching the building, behind which Morand's division were taking shelter from the fire, Lannes called for fifty volunteers to go forward and plant the ladders. Many more than that number came forward, and the number had to be reduced. The brave fellows, led by picked officers, set out with admirable spirit; but they were hardly clear of the building when they met the hail of bullets, and were nearly all laid low. A few only continued to descend into the ditch, where the guns soon disabled them, and the remains of this first column fell back, streaming with blood, to the place where the division was sheltered. Nevertheless, at the call of Lannes and Morand, fifty more volunteers appeared, and, seizing the ladders, made for the ditch. No sooner, however, did they show themselves than a still hotter fire nearly annihilated them. Cooled by these two repulses, the troops made no response to the marshal's third call for volunteers. If he had ordered one or more companies to march, they would, no doubt, have obeyed; but he knew well what a difference there is in point of effect between obedience on the soldiers' part and *dash;* and for the present danger volunteers were much better than troops obeying

orders. Vainly, however, did the marshal renew his appeal to the bravest of a brave division; vainly did he call upon them to observe that the eyes of the Emperor and all the Grand Army were on them. A gloomy silence was the only reply, the men being convinced that to pass beyond the walls of the building into the enemy's fire was certain death. At length, Lannes exclaiming, 'Well, I will let you see that I was a grenadier before I was a marshal, and still am one,' seized a ladder, lifted it, and would have carried it towards the breach. His aides-de-camp tried to stop him; he resisted, and got angry with us. I ventured to say, '*Monsieur le Maréchal*, you would not wish us to be disgraced, and that we should be if you were to receive the slightest wound in carrying that ladder to the ramparts as long as one of your aides-de-camp was left alive.' Then, in spite of his efforts, I dragged the end of the ladder from him, and put it on my shoulder, while de Viry took the other end, and our comrades by pairs took up other ladders.

At the sight of a marshal disputing with his aides-de-camp for the lead of the assault, a shout of enthusiasm went up from the whole division. Officers and soldiers wished to lead the column, and in their eagerness for this honour they pushed my comrades and me about, trying to get hold of the ladders. If however we had given them up, we should seem to have been playing a comedy to stimulate the troops. The wine had been drawn, and we had to drink it, bitter as it might be. Understanding this, the marshal let us have our way, though fully expecting to see the greater part of his staff exterminated as they marched at the head of this perilous attack.

I have said already that my comrades, although as brave as possible, lacked experience, and more especially what is called military tact. I made, therefore, no demur about taking the command of the little column. The matter was important enough to warrant it, and no one contested my right. Behind the building I organised the detachment which was to follow us. The destruction of the two former columns I ascribed to the imprudence with which their leaders

had massed together the soldiers composing them. This arrangement was unsuitable in two ways. First, it gave the enemy the advantage of firing upon a mass instead of upon isolated men, and secondly, our grenadiers, who were laden with ladders, having formed a single group and getting in each other's way, had not been able to move fast enough to get quickly clear of the Austrian fire. I settled, therefore, that de Viry and I, carrying the first ladder, should start off at a run; that the second ladder should follow at twenty paces distant, and the rest in due course; that when we reached the promenade the ladders should be placed five feet apart to avoid confusion; that when we descended into the ditch we should leave every second ladder against the wall towards the promenade so that the troops might follow without delay; that the others should be lifted and carried quickly to the breach, where we should place them only a foot apart, both on account of the want of space and in order that we might reach the top of the rampart close together and push back the besieged when they tried to throw us down. This plan having been expounded and comprehended, the marshal, who approved it, cried, 'Off with you, my boys, and Ratisbon is taken.' At the word, de Viry and I darted out, crossed the promenade at a run, and, lowering our ladder, descended into the ditch. Our comrades followed with fifty grenadiers. In vain did the cannon thunder, the musketry rattle, grapeshot and bullets strike trees and walls. It is very difficult to take aim at isolated individuals moving very fast and twenty paces apart, and we got into the ditch without one man of our little column being wounded. The ladders already indicated were lifted, we carried them to the top of the rubbish from the ruined house, and placing them against the parapet, we ran up them to the rampart. I was first up one of the first ladders, Labédoyère, who was climbing the one beside me, feeling that the lower end of it was not very steadily placed on the rubbish, asked me to give him my hand to steady him, and so we both reached the top of the rampart in full view of the Emperor and the whole army, who saluted us with a mighty cheer. It was one of the finest days of my

life. De Viry and d'Albuquerque joined us in a moment with the other aides-de-camp and fifty grenadiers and by this time a regiment of Morand's division was coming towards the ditch at the double.

The chances of war are often strange. The two first detachments had been annihilated before reaching the foot of the breach, and yet the third suffered no loss whatever. Only my friend de Viry had a button of his pelisse carried away by a bullet; yet if the enemy on the parapet had had the presence of mind to charge with the bayonet on Labédoyère and me, it is probable that we should have been overwhelmed by their number, and either killed or hurled back into the ditch. But Austrians lose their heads very quickly; the boldness and rapidity of our attack astonished them to such a point that when they saw us swarming over the breach they first slackened their fire and soon ceased firing altogether. Not only did none of their companies march against us, but all went off in the opposite direction to the point which we had just carried.

As I said, the attack took place close to the Straubing gate. Marshal Lannes had ordered me to get it opened or break it down, so that he could enter the town with Morand's division. Accordingly, as soon as I saw my fifty grenadiers on the ramparts, and the head of the supporting regiment already arrived in the ditch, where their passage was secured by a further supply of ladders, I went down into the town without further delay, every moment being precious. We marched steadily towards the Straubing gate, only a hundred paces from the breach, and great was my surprise to find an Austrian battalion massed under the immense archway, all the men facing towards the gate, so as to be ready to defend it if the French broke it in. The major in command, thinking only of the duty which was entrusted him and taking no heed of the noise which he heard on the ramparts close by, was so confident that the French attack would fail that he had not even placed a sentry outside the archway to let him know what was going on, so he was thunderstruck at seeing us come up in his rear.

He had taken up his position behind his men, so that having faced about on seeing us approach, he found himself fronting the little French column, the strength of which he was quite unable to judge, for I had formed it in two squads, which rested on the sides of the arch and closed it completely. At their major's cry of surprise, the battalion all faced round, and the rear sections, which had become the front, presented their muskets at us. Our grenadiers also raised theirs, and as only one pace separated the two parties, you may imagine what a horrible massacre would have resulted if a shot had been fired. The situation was very dangerous for both sides, but their greater number gave the Austrians an immense advantage, for if we had opened fire muzzle to muzzle, our little column would have been destroyed as well as the enemy's company which was in front of our muskets. But the rest of the battalion would have been cleared. It was lucky that our adversaries could not tell the weakness of our force, and I hastened to tell the major that as the town had been taken by assault and occupied by our troops, nothing remained for him but to lay down his arms under pain of being put to the sword.

The assured tone in which I spoke intimidated the officer; all the more so that he could hear the tumult produced by the successive arrival of our soldiers who had followed us over the breach, and hastened to form in front of the archway. He harangued his battalion, and, after having explained the situation to them, ordered them to lay down their arms. The companies who were close to our muzzles obeyed, but those who were at the other end of the archway, close to the gate and sheltered from our shot, fell to shouting, refused to surrender, and pushed forward the mass of the battalion till we were nearly upset. The officers, however, succeeded in quieting them, and everything seemed in a fair way to be settled, when the impetuous Labédoyère, impatient at the delay, lost his temper, and was on the point of ruining the whole thing; for, seizing the Austrian major by the throat, he was just about to run him through if the rest had not turned his sword aside. The other side then

resumed their arms, and a bloody battle was about to take place, when the gate began to resound on the outside under the powerful blows which the axes of the pioneers of Morand's division, led by Marshal Lannes in person, were delivering upon it. Then the enemy, understanding that they would be between two fires, surrendered, and we made them march disarmed from under the archway towards the town. The gate thus cleared, we opened it to the marshal, whose troops rushed into the place like a torrent.

After complimenting us, the marshal gave the order to march towards the bridge, in order to cut off such of the enemy's regiments as were in Ratisbon, and prevent the Archduke from sending reinforcements. Hardly, however, had we entered the main street when we were threatened by a new danger. Our shells had set several houses on fire, and the fire was on the point of reaching some thirty wagons, which the enemy had abandoned after taking out the horses. If these had caught fire, the passage of our troops would certainly have been hindered, but we hoped to avoid the obstacle by slipping along close to the walls. Suddenly, however, the Austrian major whom I had presented to the marshal cried out in a tone of most profound despair, 'Conquerors and conquered, we are all lost; those wagons are full of powder!' We all turned pale, including the marshal, but, quickly recovering his calm in presence of imminent death, he made the French column take open order, and file their muskets against the houses, and ordered the soldiers to push the wagons along from hand to hand until they were under the arch and out of the town. He himself set the example, and generals, officers, and men all went to work. The Austrian prisoners worked with the French, for it was a question of life and death with them also. Many pieces of burning wood were already falling on the wagons, and if one of them had taken fire, we should have been all blown up, and the town entirely destroyed. But they worked with such energy that in a few minutes all the powder-wagons were pushed outside the town, whence the prisoners were made to draw them to our main park of artillery.

The tumbrils being safely out of the way, and the danger over, the marshal, with the infantry brigade, advanced to the centre of the town. Having reached this point, and wishing to make the quarters which he had already captured secure against any renewed attack, he followed the Spanish practice, and occupied all the windows in the principal streets. After this prudent arrangement, the marshal ordered that the column should continue its route towards the bridge, and ordered me to march at the head and guide it. I obeyed, though it seemed a difficult task, for I had never been in Ratisbon before, and, naturally, did not know the streets.

As the town belonged to our ally, the King of Bavaria, it might have been expected that the inhabitants would be sufficiently devoted to our cause to point out the way to the bridge; but they were too frightened to come out, and we did not see one. All the doors and windows were shut, and we were in too great a hurry to drive them in, for at every cross-road appeared groups of Austrians who retreated firing. The only retreat open to the enemy was across the bridge, and I thought that I might get there by following them, but there was so little concerted action among the Austrians that most of the squads of sharpshooters who were posted in front of us took flight at our approach in different directions. As I was thus lost in the labyrinth of unknown streets, with no idea of the direction that the column should take, suddenly a door opened, and a young woman, pale and with wild eyes, came flying towards us, crying, 'I am French, save me!' It was a Parisian milliner in business at Ratisbon, who, fearing that, as a Frenchwoman, she might be ill-treated by the Austrians, had, as soon as she heard the sound of French voices, come to throw herself headlong into the arms of her compatriots. At sight of her a bright idea flashed into my mind. 'Do you know where the bridge is?' said I. 'Certainly.' 'Show us the way, then.' 'Great Heavens! In the middle of this shooting? I am frightened to death already, and was going to ask you to let me have some soldiers to defend my house. I am going back this moment.' 'Very sorry, but you will show us the bridge before you go back.

Two men take the lady's arms, and march her along at the head of the column.' This was done, in spite of the tears and cries of our fair compatriot. At every turning I asked her which direction we must take. The nearer we got to the Danube, the more skirmishers we met; the bullets whistled round the frightened milliner's ears, but, not being familiar with the sound, she was much less alarmed at the faint whistle than at the reports of the muskets. But suddenly one of the grenadiers who was supporting her got a bullet through his arm; the blood spurted on to her, her knees gave way, and we had to carry her. What had befallen her neighbour made me more cautious for her, so I put her in rear of the first section, so as to be in some measure sheltered from bullets by the men. At last we reached a little square facing the bridge. The enemy, who held the further end of it, as well as the suburb on the right bank named Stadt-am-Hof, no sooner caught sight of the column than they opened artillery fire. I thought it was useless to expose the lady from Paris any longer, and let her go free. But as the poor woman, who was more dead than alive, knew not where to take shelter, I advised her to enter a little chapel of Our Lady at the further end of the square. She agreed, the grenadiers lifted her over the little grating which closed the entry, and she hastened to get out of reach of shot, crouching down behind the statue of the Virgin, where, I can assure you, she made herself pretty small.

On hearing that we had reached the bank of the river, the marshal came to the head of the column and recognised for himself the impossibility of crossing the bridge, the suburb on the left bank being on fire. While the assault was taking place, six Austrian battalions, posted on the ramparts at some distance from the point of attack, had remained tranquilly looking out to see if anyone was coming from the country. They were roused from their stolid inaction by the sound of firing in the direction of the bridge. Hastening thither, they found their retreat cut off both by us and by the burning suburb, and had to surrender.

The same day the Emperor entered Ratisbon, and ordered

the troops who had not fought to assist the inhabitants in getting the fire under; still a great many houses were burnt. After having visited and rewarded the wounded, the glorious remains of the two first columns who had failed in their attempt, Napoleon wished also to see the third column, which had carried Ratisbon under his eyes. He testified his satisaction, and decorated several. On the marshal reminding him of my old and new claims to the rank of major, Napoleon replied, 'You may consider the thing done.' Then, turning to Berthier, 'Make me sign his commission the first time you bring up any papers.' I could only congratulate myself, I could not reasonably expect the Emperor to suspend his important work that I might have my commission a few days earlier. Indeed, I was almost beside myself at the marks of satisfaction which the Emperor and the marshal had shown towards me, and at the praises which my comrades and I received on all hands.

As you may suppose, before leaving the neighbourhood of the bridge, I had the Paris lady fetched from the chapel and taken to her house by an officer. The marshal, seeing the soldiers helping her to re-cross the grating, asked me how she got there. I told him the story, which he passed on to the Emperor, who laughed a good deal, and said that he should like to see the lady.

Among the many spectators of our attack—which, as I have said, was delivered in full view of the Grand Army—were Marshal Masséna and his staff. One of them, M. Pelet,[1] now Director-General of Military Stores, has written in his excellent work on the campaign of 1809: 'Marshal Lannes seized a ladder, and was starting to fix it himself; his aides-de-camp struggled to stop him. At the sight of this generous contest, the mass of our soldiers fell on the ladders, caught them up, and crossed the intervening span, preceded by the aides-de-camp. In the twinkling of an eye the ladders were fixed, the

[1] General Pelet, to whom we owe several works on Napoleon's campaigns, was appointed Director-General of Military Stores in 1830, and lived till 1858. The passage quoted is 'Mémoires sur la Guerre de 1809,' vol. ii. pp. 107, 8.

ditch crossed. On the top the first seen to appear, holding each other's hand, were Labédoyère and Marbot; the grenadiers followed.' This account of an eye-witness is quite correct; he rightly gives equal credit to my comrade and myself. But the biographer of poor Labédoyère [1] has not been so fair. After copying General Pelet's account, he has thought fit to suppress my name and give Labédoyère the sole credit of having been the leader of the assault at Ratisbon. However, I saw no occasion to put him right; and, after all, General Pelet's work establishes the fact, to which 150,000 men could testify.

Ratisbon was taken April 23. The Emperor passed the next two days in the town, ordering all repairs to be done at his cost. As Napoleon, accompanied by Lannes, was going about the streets, I saw the milliner whom I had compelled to act as our guide to the bridge, and pointed her out to the marshal. He showed her to the Emperor, who spoke to her, with many jocose compliments on her courage; and subsequently sent her a handsome ring in memory of the assault. The crowd of soldiers and civilians who were about the Emperor, having made inquiries about the action of this little scene, the facts were somewhat distorted. The lady was represented as a heroine, who of her own accord had faced death to ensure the safety of her compatriots. In this form the tale was told, not only in the army, but throughout Germany. Even General Pelet was misled by the popular report. If the Parisian lady was for a time under fire from the enemy, love of glory had very little to do with it.

During our short stay at Ratisbon, the marshal appointed on his staff Lieutenant de la Bourdonnaye, an intelligent and brave young officer, who had been recommended to him by his father-in-law, M. de Guéhéneuc. La Bourdonnaye was distressed at missing the assault, but he had plenty more opportunities of showing his courage. A comical adventure

[1] I cannot verify this reference, but the biographer of Labédoyère in the Supplement (1841) to the 'Biographie Universelle,' certainly does not mention Marbot. It must, however, be remembered that Labédoyère was afterwards a more conspicuous personage.

befell him in this connection. The dandies in the army had taken to trousers of inordinate width, which looked very well on horseback, but were a great hindrance to walking. During the action at Wels, La Bourdonnaye had been ordered by the marshal to dismount, and run across the bridge with an order for the troops. His spurs caught in his trousers, he fell, and we thought he was killed. But he picked himself up nimbly, and as he started off again, he heard the marshal call out, 'Is it not absurd to go to fight with six yards of cloth about your legs?' La Bourdonnaye wishing, in his first battle under Lannes' eyes, to show his zeal, drew his sword, hacked and tore his trousers off at mid-thigh, and being thus released, set off running bare-kneed. Although we were under fire, the marshal and the staff laughed at the new-fashioned costume till they cried; and when La Bourdonnaye came back, he was complimented on his ready ingenuity.

Leaving a strong garrison in Ratisbon, the Emperor marched on Vienna by the right bank of the Danube, while the enemy followed the left bank in the same direction. I need not relate all the engagements which we had with Austrian forces trying to bar our road. I will only mention that Masséna, whose division had hitherto been held by circumstances aloof from all the fighting, was imprudent enough on May 3 to attack the bridge of Ebersberg over the Traun, which was defended by 40,000 men with a fortress in their rear. The attack was utterly useless, since before it began Lannes' division had crossed the Traun five leagues higher up, and was marching to take the Austrians in rear. They would certainly have retired at our approach without Masséna's losing a single man. His attack, made in order to pass a river already passed, succeeded, but with a loss of more than 1,000 killed and 2,000 wounded. The Emperor blamed[1] this waste of human life, and, doubtless to give Masséna a lesson, he sent from Wels a brigade of light cavalry under the command of General Durosnel, who descended the left bank of the Traun, and reached Ebersberg without firing a shot, at

[1] General Pelet says that if Napoleon did blame Masséna, he never heard of it.

the same time as Masséna's troops entered after considerable loss. Napoleon went from Wels to Ebersberg by the right bank, which showed that the road was perfectly clear. On reaching the field of battle, he was deeply grieved at the sight of so many men uselessly killed, and would see no one for the whole evening. If any other than Masséna had ventured without orders to deliver an attack so imprudently, he would probably have been sent to the rear, but Masséna was the spoilt child of victory, and the Emperor limited himself to some severe remarks. The army was less indulgent, and criticised Masséna's conduct loudly. In excuse he said that as the Austrians who were defending the place under General Hiller had the bridge across the Danube at Mauthhausen, there was reason to fear that if they were not promptly attacked without awaiting the returning force from Wels, General Hiller might cross the Danube and join the Archduke on the other side. But this would have involved no inconvenience for us: it would have been to our advantage, for we should have found the right bank of the river entirely undefended. Furthermore, the object that Masséna had in view was not attained, for General Hiller actually did cross the Danube at Stein, and made all haste to reach Vienna.

After crossing the Traun, burning the bridge at Mauthhausen, and passing the Enns, the army advanced to Mölk, without knowing what had become of General Hiller. Some spies assured us that the Archduke had crossed the Danube and joined him, and that we should on the morrow meet the whole Austrian army, strongly posted in front of Saint-Pölten. In that case, we must make ready to fight a great battle; but if it were otherwise, we had to march quickly on Vienna in order to get there before the enemy could reach it by the other bank. For want of positive information the Emperor was very undecided. The question to be solved was, Had General Hiller crossed the Danube, or was he still in front of us, masked by a swarm of light cavalry, which, always flying, never let us get near enough to take a prisoner from whom one might get some enlightenment?

CHAPTER XLIV

STILL knowing nothing for certain, we reached, on May 7, the pretty little town of Mölk, standing on the bank of the Danube, and overhung by an immense rock, on the summit of which rises a Benedictine convent, said to be the finest and richest in Christendom. From the rooms of the monastery, a wide view is obtained over both banks of the Danube. There the Emperor and many marshals, including Lannes, took up their quarters, while our staff lodged with the parish priest. Much rain had fallen during the week, and it had not ceased for twenty-four hours, and still was falling, so that the Danube and its tributaries were over their banks. That night, as my comrades and I, delighted at being sheltered from the bad weather, were having a merry supper with the parson, a jolly fellow, who gave us an excellent meal, the aide-de-camp on duty with the marshal came to tell me that I was wanted, and must go up to the convent that moment. I was so comfortable where I was that I found it annoying to have to leave a good supper and good quarters to go and get wet again, but I had to obey.

All the passages and the lower rooms of the monastery were full of soldiers, forgetting the fatigues of the previous days in the monks' good wine. On reaching the dwelling-rooms, I saw that I had been sent for about some serious matter, for generals, chamberlains, orderly officers, said to me repeatedly, 'The Emperor has sent for you.' Some added, 'It is probably to give you your commission as major.' This I did not believe, for I did not think I was yet of sufficient importance to the sovereign for him to send for me at such an hour to give me my commission with his own hands. I was shown into a vast and handsome gallery, with

a balcony looking over the Danube; there I found the Emperor at dinner with several marshals and the abbot of the convent, who has the title of bishop. On seeing me, the Emperor left the table, and went towards the balcony, followed by Lannes. I heard him say in a low tone, 'The execution of this plan is almost impossible; it would be sending a brave officer for no purpose to almost certain death.' 'He will go, sir,' replied the marshal; 'I am certain he will go, at any rate we can but propose it to him.' Then, taking me by the hand, the marshal opened the window of the balcony over the Danube. The river at this moment, trebled in volume by the strong flood, was nearly a league wide; it was lashed by a fierce wind, and we could hear the waves roaring. It was pitch-dark, and the rain fell in torrents, but we could see on the other side a long line of bivouac fires. Napoleon, Marshal Lannes, and I, being alone on the balcony, the marshal said, 'On the other side of the river, you see an Austrian camp. Now, the Emperor is keenly desirous to know whether General Hiller's corps is there, or still on this bank. In order to make sure, he wants a stout-hearted man, bold enough to cross the Danube, and bring away some soldier of the enemy's, and I have assured him that you will go.' Then Napoleon said to me, 'Take notice that I am not giving you an order; I am only expressing a wish. I am aware that the enterprise is as dangerous as it can be, and you can decline it without any fear of displeasing me. Go, and think it over for a few moments in the next room; come back and tell us frankly your decision.'

I admit that when I heard Marshal Lannes' proposal I had broken out all over in a cold sweat; but at the same moment, a feeling, which I cannot define, but in which a love of glory and of my country was mingled, perhaps, with a noble pride, raised my ardour to the highest point, and I said to myself, 'The Emperor has here an army of 150,000 devoted warriors, besides 25,000 men of his guard, all selected from the bravest. He is surrounded with aides-de-camp and orderly officers, and yet when an expedition is on foot,

requiring intelligence no less than boldness, it is I whom the Emperor and Marshal Lannes choose.' 'I will go, sir!' I cried without hesitation. 'I will go; and if I perish, I leave my mother to your Majesty's care.' The Emperor pulled my ear to mark his satisfaction; the marshal shook my hand, exclaiming, 'I was quite right to tell your Majesty that he would go. There's what you may call a brave soldier.'

My expedition being thus decided on, I had to think about the means of executing it. The Emperor called General Bertrand, his aide-de-camp, General Dorsenne, of the guard, and the commandant of the imperial head-quarters, and ordered them to put at my disposal whatever I might require. At my request an infantry picket went into the town to find the burgomaster, the syndic of the boatmen, and five of his best hands. A corporal and five grenadiers of the old guard who could all speak German, and had still to earn their decorations, were also summoned, and voluntarily agreed to go with me. The Emperor had them brought in first, and promised that on their return they should receive the Cross at once. The brave men replied by a 'Vive l'Empereur!' and went to get ready. As for the five boatmen, on its being explained to them through the interpreter that they had to take a boat across the Danube, they fell on their knees and began to weep. The syndic declared that they might just as well be shot at once, as sent to certain death. The expedition was absolutely impossible, not only from the strength of the current, but because the tributaries had brought into the Danube a great quantity of fir-trees recently cut down in the mountains, which could not be avoided in the dark, and would certainly come against the boat and sink it. Besides, how could one land on the opposite bank among willows which would scuttle the boat, and with a flood of unknown extent? The syndic concluded, then, that the operation was physically impossible. In vain did the Emperor tempt them with an offer of 6,000 francs per man; even this could not persuade them, though, as they said, they were poor boatmen with

families, and this sum would be a fortune to them. But, as I have already said, some lives must be sacrificed to save those of the greater number, and the knowledge of this makes commanders sometimes pitiless. The Emperor was inflexible, and the grenadiers received orders to take the poor men, whether they would or not, and we went down to the town.

The corporal who had been assigned to me was an intelligent man. Taking him for my interpreter, I charged him as we went along to tell the syndic of the boatmen that as he had got to come along with us, he had better in his own interest show us his best boat, and point out everything that we should require for her fitting. The poor man obeyed; so we got an excellent vessel, and we took all that we wanted from the others. We had two anchors, but as I did not think we should be able to make use of them, I had sewn to the end of each cable a piece of canvas with a large stone wrapped in it. I had seen in the south of France the fishermen use an apparatus of this kind to hold their boats by throwing the cord over the willows at the water's edge. I put on a cap, the grenadiers took their forage-caps, we had provisions, ropes, axes, saws, a ladder—everything, in short, which I could think of to take.

Our preparations ended, I was going to give the signal to start, when the five boatmen implored me with tears to let the soldiers escort them to their houses to take, perhaps, the last farewell of their wives and children; but, fearing that a tender scene of this kind would further reduce their small stock of courage, I refused. Then the syndic said, 'Well, as we have only a short time to live, allow us five minutes to commend our souls to God, and do you do the same, for you also are going to your death.' They all fell on their knees, the grenadiers and I following their example, which seemed to please the worthy people much. When their prayer was over, I gave each man a glass of the monks' excellent wine, and we pushed out into the stream.

I had bidden the grenadiers follow in silence all the orders of the syndic who was steering; the current was too

strong for us to cross over straight from Mölk: we went up, therefore, along the bank under sail for more than a league, and although the wind and the waves made the boat jump, this part was accomplished without accident. But when the time came to take to our oars and row out from the land, the mast on being lowered fell over to one side, and the sail, dragging in the water, offered a strong resistance to the current and nearly capsized us. The master ordered the ropes to be cut and the masts to be sent overboard; but the boatmen, losing their heads, began to pray without stirring. Then the corporal, drawing his sword, said, 'You can pray and work too; obey at once, or I will kill you.' Compelled to choose between possible and certain death, the poor fellows took up their hatchets, and with the help of the grenadiers, the mast was promptly cut away and sent floating. It was high time, for hardly were we free from this dangerous burden when we felt a fearful shock. A pine-stem borne down by the stream had struck the boat. We all shuddered, but luckily the planks were not driven in this time. Would the boat, however, resist more shocks of this kind? We could not see the stems, and only knew that they were near by the heavier tumble of the waves. Several touched us, but no serious accident resulted. Meantime the current bore us along, and as our oars could make very little way against it to give us the necessary slant, I feared for a moment that it would sweep us below the enemy's camp, and that my expedition would fail. By dint of hard rowing, however, we had got three-quarters of the way over, when I saw an immense black mass looming over the water. Then a sharp scratching was heard, branches caught us in the face, and the boat stopped. To our questions the owner replied that we were on an island covered with willows and poplars, of which the flood had nearly reached the top. We had to grope about with our hatchets to clear a passage through the branches, and when we had succeeded in passing the obstacle, we found the stream much less furious than in the middle of the river, and finally reached the left bank in front of the Austrian camp. This shore was bordered with very thick

trees, which, overhanging the bank like a dome, made the approach difficult no doubt, but at the same time concealed our boat from the camp. The whole shore was lighted up by the bivouac fires, while we remained in the shadow thrown by the branches of the willows. I let the boat float downwards, looking for a suitable landing-place. Presently I perceived that a sloping path had been made down the bank by the enemy to allow the men and horses to get to the water. The corporal adroitly threw into the willows one of the stones that I had made ready, the cord caught in a tree, and the boat brought up against the land a foot or two from the slope. It must have been just about midnight. The Austrians, having the swollen Danube between them and the French, felt themselves so secure that except the sentry the whole camp was asleep.

It is usual in war for the guns and the sentinels always to face towards the enemy, however far off he may be. A battery placed in advance of the camp was therefore turned towards the river, and sentries were walking on the top of the bank. The trees prevented them from seeing the extreme edge, while from the boat I could see through the branches a great part of the bivouac. So far my mission had been more successful than I had ventured to hope, but in order to make the success complete I had to bring away a prisoner, and to execute such an operation fifty paces away from several thousand enemies, whom a single cry would rouse, seemed very difficult. Still, I had to do something. I made the five sailors lie down at the bottom of the boat under guard of two grenadiers, another grenadier I posted at the bow of the boat, which was close to the bank, and myself disembarked, sword in hand, followed by the corporal and two grenadiers. The boat was a few feet from dry land; we had to walk in the water, but at last we were on the slope. We went up, and I was making ready to rush upon the nearest sentry, disarm him, gag him, and drag him off to the boat, when the ring of metal and the sound of singing in a low voice fell on my ears. A man, carrying a great tin pail, was coming to draw water, humming a song as he went; we

quickly went down again to the river to hide under the branches, and as the Austrian stooped to fill his pail my grenadiers seized him by the throat, put a handkerchief full of wet sand over his mouth, and placing their sword-points against his body threatened him with death if he resisted or uttered a sound. Utterly bewildered, the man obeyed, and let us take him to the boat; we hoisted him into the hands of the grenadiers posted there, who made him lie down beside the sailors. While this Austrian was lying captured, I saw by his clothes that he was not strictly speaking a soldier, but an officer's servant. I should have preferred to catch a combatant, who could have given me more precise information; but I was going to content myself with this capture for want of a better, when I saw at the top of the slope two soldiers carrying a cauldron between them, on a pole. They were only a few paces off. It was impossible for us to re-embark without being seen. I therefore signed to my grenadiers to hide themselves again, and as soon as the two Austrians stooped to fill their vessel powerful arms seized them from behind, and plunged their heads under water. We had to stupefy them a little, since they had their swords, and I feared that they might resist. Then they were picked up in turn, their mouths covered with a handkerchief full of sand, and sword-points against their breasts constrained them to follow us. They were shipped as the servant had been, and my men and I got on board again.

So far all had gone well. I made the sailors get up and take their oars, and ordered the corporal to cast loose the rope which held us to the bank. It was, however, so wet, and the knot had been drawn so tight by the force of the stream, that it was impossible to unfasten. We had to saw the rope, which took us some minutes. Meanwhile, the rope, shaking with our efforts, imparted its movement to the branches of the willow round which it was wrapped, and the rustling became loud enough to attract the notice of the sentry. He drew near, unable to see the boat, but perceiving that the agitation of the branches increased, he called

out, 'Who goes there?' No answer. Further challenge from the sentry. We held our tongues, and worked away. I was in deadly fear; after facing so many dangers, it would have been too cruel if we were wrecked in sight of port. At last, the rope was cut and the boat pushed off. But hardly was it clear of the overhanging willows than the light of the bivouac fires made it visible to the sentry, who, shouting, 'To arms,' fired at us. No one was hit; but at the sound the whole camp was astir in a moment, and the gunners, whose pieces were ready loaded and trained on the river, honoured my boat with some cannon-shots. At the report my heart leapt for joy, for I knew that the Emperor and marshal would hear it. I turned my eyes towards the convent, with its lighted windows, of which I had, in spite of the distance, never lost sight. Probably all were opened at this moment, but in one only could I perceive any increase of brilliancy; it was the great balcony window, which was as large as the doorway of a church, and sent from afar a flood of light over the stream. Evidently it had just been opened at the thunder of the cannon, and I said to myself, 'The Emperor and the marshals are doubtless on the balcony; they know that I have reached the enemy's camp, and are making vows for my safe return.' This thought raised my courage, and I heeded the cannon-balls not a bit. Indeed, they were not very dangerous, for the stream swept us along at such a pace that the gunners could not aim with any accuracy, and we must have been very unlucky to get hit. One shot would have done for us, but all fell harmless into the Danube. Soon I was out of range, and could reckon a successful issue to my enterprise. Still, all danger was not yet at an end. We had still to cross among the floating pine-stems, and more than once we struck on submerged islands, and were delayed by the branches of the poplars. At last we reached the right bank, more than two leagues below Mölk, and a new terror assailed me. I could see bivouac fires, and had no means of learning whether they belonged to a French regiment. The enemy had troops on both banks, and I knew that on the right bank Marshal

Lannes' outposts were not far from Mölk, facing an Austrian corps, posted at Saint-Pölten.

Our army would doubtless go forward at daybreak, but was it already occupying this place? And were the fires that I saw those of friends or enemies? I was afraid that the current had taken me too far down, but the problem was solved by French cavalry trumpets sounding the reveillé. Our uncertainty being at an end, we rowed with all our strength to the shore, where in the dawning light we could see a village. As we drew near, the report of a carbine was heard, and a bullet whistled by our ears. It was evident that the French sentries took us for a hostile crew. I had not foreseen this possibility, and hardly knew how we were to succeed in getting recognised, till the happy thought struck me of making my six grenadiers shout, 'Vive l'Empereur Napoléon!' This was, of course, no certain evidence that we were French, but it would attract the attention of the officers, who would have no fear of our small numbers, and would no doubt prevent the men from firing on us before they knew whether we were French or Austrians. A few moments later I came ashore, and I was received by Colonel Gautrin and the 9th Hussars, forming part of Lannes' division. If we had landed half a league lower down we should have tumbled into the enemy's pickets. The colonel lent me a horse, and gave me several wagons, in which I placed the grenadiers, the boatmen, and the prisoners, and the little cavalcade went off towards Mölk. As we went along, the corporal, at my orders, questioned the three Austrians, and I learnt with satisfaction that the camp whence I had brought them away belonged to the very division, General Hiller's, the position of which the Emperor was so anxious to learn. There was, therefore, no further doubt that that general had joined the Archduke on the other side of the Danube. There was no longer any question of a battle on the road which we held, and Napoleon, having only the enemy's cavalry in front of him, could in perfect safety push his troops forward towards Vienna, from which we were but three easy marches distant. With this information I galloped forward,

in order to bring it to the Emperor with the least possible delay.

When I reached the gate of the monastery, it was broad day. I found the approach blocked by the whole population of the little town of Mölk, and heard among the crowd the cries of the wives, children, and friends of the sailors whom I had carried off. In a moment I was surrounded by them, and was able to calm their anxiety by saying, in shocking bad German, 'Your friends are alive, and you will see them in a few moments.' A great cry of joy went up from the crowd, bringing out the officer in command of the guard at the gate. On seeing me he ran off in pursuance of orders to warn the aides-de-camp to let the Emperor know of my return. In an instant the whole palace was up. The good Marshal Lannes came to me, embraced me cordially, and carried me straight off to the Emperor, crying out, 'Here he is, sir; I knew he would come back. He has brought three prisoners from General Hiller's division.' Napoleon received me warmly, and though I was wet and muddy all over, he laid his hand on my shoulder, and did not forget to give his greatest sign of satisfaction by pinching my ear. I leave you to imagine how I was questioned! The Emperor wanted to know every incident of the adventure in detail, and when I had finished my story said, 'I am very well pleased with you, 'Major' Marbot. These words were equivalent to a commission, and my joy was full. At that moment, a chamberlain announced that breakfast was served, and as I was calculating on having to wait in the gallery until the Emperor had finished, he pointed with his finger towards the dining-room, and said, 'You will breakfast with me.' As this honour had never been paid to any officer of my rank, I was the more flattered. During breakfast I learnt that the Emperor and the marshal had not been to bed all night, and that when they heard the cannon on the opposite bank they had all rushed on to the balcony. The Emperor made me tell again the way in which I had surprised the three prisoners, and laughed much at the fright and surprise which they must have felt.

At last, the arrival of the wagons was announced, but

they had much difficulty in making their way through the crowd, so eager were the people to see the boatmen. Napoleon thinking this very natural gave orders to open the gates, and let everybody come into the court. Soon after, the grenadiers, the boatmen, and the prisoners were led into the gallery. The Emperor, through his interpreter, first questioned the three Austrian soldiers, and learning with satisfaction that not only General Hiller's corps, but the whole of the Archduke's army, were on the other bank he told Berthier to give the order for the troops to march at once on Saint-Pölten. Then, calling up the corporal and the five soldiers, he fastened the Cross on their breast, appointed them knights of the Empire, and gave them an annuity of 1,200 francs apiece. All the veterans wept for joy. Next came the boatmen's turn. The Emperor told them that, as the danger they had run was a good deal more than he had expected, it was only fair that he should increase their reward; so, instead of the 6,000 francs promised, 12,000 in gold were given to them on the spot. Nothing could express their delight; they kissed the hands of the Emperor and all present, crying, 'Now we are rich!' Napoleon laughingly asked the syndic if he would go the same journey for the same price the next night. But the man answered that, having escaped by miracle what seemed certain death, he would not undertake such a journey again even if his lordship, the abbot of Mölk, would give him the monastery and all its possessions. The boatmen withdrew, blessing the generosity of the French Emperor, and the grenadiers, eager to show off their decoration before their comrades, were about to go off with their three prisoners, when Napoleon perceived that the Austrian servant was weeping bitterly. He reassured him as to his safety, but the poor lad replied, sobbing, that he knew the French treated their prisoners well, but that, as he had on him a belt, containing nearly all his captain's money, he was afraid that the officer would accuse him of deserting in order to rob him, and he was heart-broken at the thought. Touched by the worthy fellow's distress, the Emperor told him that he was free, and as soon as we were before Vienna, he would be

passed through the outposts, and be able to return to his master. Then, taking a rouleau of 1,000 francs, he put it in the man's hand, saying, 'One must honour goodness wherever it is shown.' Lastly, the Emperor gave some pieces of gold to each of the other two prisoners, and ordered that they too should be sent back to the Austrian outposts, so that they might forget the fright which we had caused them, and that it might not be said that any soldiers, even enemies, had spoken to the Emperor of the French without receiving some benefit.

CHAPTER XLV

On leaving the gallery I found the ante-room filled with generals and officers of the guard. My comrades were there also, and all congratulated me, both on the success of my expedition, and on the step which the Emperor had granted to me by addressing me as 'major.' It was not, however, till next month that I got my commission, by which time I had another wound to show for it. Do not, however, accuse the Emperor of ingratitude; during May his time was taken up by the events of the war, and as he always gave me the title of major he would naturally think that I considered myself as such.

As we moved from Mölk to Saint-Pölten, the Emperor and Marshal Lannes put many further questions to me as to the doings of that night. They halted opposite to the old castle of Dürrenstein, on the further bank. This place had a double interest for us, both as commanding the scene of the memorable fight[1] when Marshal Mortier, separated from the rest of the French army in 1805, had to cut his way through the Russian troops, and as having, in the middle ages, been the prison of Richard Cœur de Lion. While studying these ruins, and meditating on the fate of the royal warrior who was so long shut up there, Napoleon fell into a deep reverie. Had he a presentiment that his enemies would one day shut him up, and that he would end his life as a captive?

Marshal Lannes, hearing several cannon-shots in the direction of Saint-Pölten, moved rapidly on that town, and a few charges took place in the streets between our advanced guard and a small force of light cavalry which the enemy still had on the right bank. All my colleagues being

[1] See p. 179.

at the moment on duty, I happened to be alone with the marshal when we entered Saint-Pölten. Passing in front of a nunnery we saw the abbess come out with a crozier in her hand, followed by all her nuns. The holy women, terrified, were coming to seek protection. The marshal reassured them, and, as the enemy were flying and our troops in the occupation of the town, he thought he might safely dismount. A scorching sun had followed the tempest of the previous night. The marshal had just covered three leagues at a gallop, and was very hot. The abbess invited him to come and take some refreshment. He accepted; and behold us two in the convent surrounded by some fifty nuns! In a moment the table was laid and a splendid luncheon served. I never saw such a profusion of syrups, preserves, sweetmeats of all sorts. We did them full justice, and the nuns filled our pockets with them, presenting several boxes to the marshal, who said that he would take them as a present from these ladies to his children. Alas! he was never to see his dear children again.

That night the Emperor and the marshal slept at Saint-Pölten; two days more brought us to Vienna, which we reached very early on May 10. The Emperor made his way at once to the royal palace at Schönbrunn, thus being at the gates of the Austrian capital twenty-seven days after leaving Paris. We had thought that the Archduke Charles would have hastened his march on the left bank, and crossed the river by the bridge of Spitz, so as to reach Vienna before us; but he was several days behind, and only a feeble garrison defended the capital. The city proper of Vienna is very small, but is surrounded by immense suburbs, which are enclosed by a single wall too weak to stop an army. The Archduke Maximilian, who commanded in Vienna, abandoned the suburbs, therefore, and withdrew with all the combatants behind the old fortifications of the town. If he had chosen to make use of the assistance offered by the courageous population, he might have held out for some time, but he did not do so, and on their arrival the French troops occupied the suburbs without striking a blow. Marshal

Lannes, deceived by an incorrect report, and thinking that the enemy had also abandoned the city, sent Colonel Guéhéneuc in a hurry to tell the Emperor that we occupied Vienna, and Napoleon, eager to announce this great news, ordered M. Guéhéneuc to set out at once for Paris. But the place still held out, and when Lannes tried to enter at the head of a division, we were received with cannon-shots. General Tharreau was wounded and several soldiers killed. The marshal withdrew the troops into the suburbs, and decided to send Colonel Saint-Mars with a summons to the governor. He was accompanied by M. de la Grange, who, having been for a long time attached to the French embassy at Vienna, knew his way perfectly. A flag of truce ought to go forward alone, accompanied by a trumpeter; but instead of acting according to this custom, Colonel Saint-Mars took three orderlies, and M. de la Grange the same number, so that with the trumpeter there were nine of them, which was far too many. The enemy thought, or pretended to think, that they were coming to inspect the fortifications rather than to bring a summons to surrender. A gate suddenly opened, and there came out a squad of Hungarian hussars, who charged sword in hand upon the party, wounded them all severely, and carried them prisoners into the town. The troopers who committed this act of barbarism belonged to the Szekler regiment, the same which, in 1799, had murdered the French plenipotentiaries, Roberjot and Bonnier, and severely wounded Jean Debry outside Rastadt.[1]

On hearing of the unworthy manner in which the Austrians had shed the blood of the party sent with a flag of truce, the Emperor came up indignantly, and sent for a great number of howitzers to bombard Vienna in the night. The defenders, meanwhile, had opened a terrible fire on the suburbs, and kept it up for twenty-four hours at the risk of killing their fellow-citizens.

On the morning of the 11th, the Emperor went round the outskirts of Vienna, and noticing that the Archduke Maximilian had committed the serious mistake of not lining

[1] See p. 21.

the Prater with troops, he resolved to take possession of it by throwing a bridge over the small arm of the Danube. To this end two companies of voltigeurs crossed in boats and occupied the 'Lusthaus,' with the neighbouring wood to protect the construction of the bridge. This was finished during the night, and as soon as it was known in Vienna that the French held the Prater and could march thence towards the Spitz bridge, the only way of retreat open to the garrison, there was great agitation, which fresh events soon increased. By ten o'clock in the evening our gunners, covered by the solid buildings of the imperial stables, began to throw shells into the town, which soon was on fire in several quarters, and notably in the Graben.

It has been said, and repeated though wrongly by General Pelet, that the Archduchess Louisa lying ill at that time in her father's palace, the commander of the garrison gave notice of this to the Emperor of the French, and that orders were given to change the positions of the batteries.[1] This story is quite fictitious, for Marie Louise was not in Vienna during the attack, and if she had been the Austrian generals would certainly not have exposed their Emperor's daughter to the hazards of war, when she could with proper care have been taken in a few minutes to the other side of the Danube. But there are some people who will discover the marvellous everywhere, and have pleased themselves by making out that the life of the archduchess was saved by him whose throne she was shortly to share.

Our shells continued to pour upon the town till midnight, when Napoleon, leaving the task of directing the fire to the artillery generals, started with Marshal Lannes to return to Schönbrunn. It was bright moonlight, and, the road being good, the Emperor set off as usual at a gallop. He was riding for the first time a handsome horse presented to him by the King of Bavaria. His equerry, M. de Canisy, among whose duties was that of trying the Emperor's horses, had

[1] Scott, 'Life of Napoleon,' chap. xlvii, gives the story on the authority of Bourrienne. Pelet also affirms the truth of it, and moralises a good deal on it.

doubtless neglected this precaution, but affirmed that the horse was perfect. After a few paces the horse fell; the Emperor rolled off and lay at full length without giving a sign of life. We thought he was dead, but he had only fainted. He was quickly picked up, and, in spite of all that Marshal Lannes could say, insisted on riding the rest of the way. He took another mount, and started again at a gallop. On reaching the great court of the palace, he made all the staff and the squadron of his guard who had witnessed the accident draw up in a circle round him, and forbade anyone to speak of it. The secret, though entrusted to more than two hundred persons, half of whom were common troopers, was so religiously kept that the army and Europe never knew that Napoleon had nearly lost his life. The equerry, Count de Canisy, expected a severe reprimand, but Napoleon only punished him by ordering him to ride the Bavarian horse every day, and after the next day, when he had been off several times owing to the weakness of the animal's legs, the Emperor pardoned him, bidding him only examine better in future horses which he gave him to ride.

Finding his retreat threatened, and the capital in danger of being burnt to the ground, the Archduke evacuated Vienna in the night and retired behind the main branch of the Danube, destroying the Spitz bridge. It was by this very bridge that the French army crossed the Danube in 1805, when, as I have related, Marshals Lannes and Murat got possession of it by a trick. After the departure of the troops, the populace were beginning to pillage the town, and the authorities sent General O'Reilly and the Archbishop, with some of the principal officials, to ask for aid from Napoleon. Upon this, several regiments entered as protectors rather than as conquerors. The citizens were disarmed, with the exception of the civic guard, who showed themselves as worthy of this mark of confidence as they were in 1805.

Marshal Lannes' headquarters were in the magnificent palace of Prince Albert of Sachs-Teschen near the Kärnthner Thor. Prince Murat had occupied this during the Austerlitz campaign, but the marshal did not stay there, preferring to

be lodged in a private house at Schönbrunn, where he could more readily communicate with the Emperor. In Vienna we found MM. Saint-Mars and de la Grange, with their escort all severely wounded. The marshal had M. Saint-Mars taken to Prince Albert's palace.

From the opening of the campaign of 1809, the English had done all in their power to stir up fresh enemies for Napoleon by raising the German populations against him and his allies. The first to rise in revolt were the Tyrolese,[1] who, taken from Austria and given to Bavaria by the treaties of 1805, saw an opportunity of returning to their former master. The Bavarians, under Marshal Lefebvre, fought many bloody engagements with the mountaineers, who, led by a simple innkeeper named Hofer, fought with heroic courage. But after some brilliant successes they were beaten by French troops coming from Italy, and their commandant, Hofer, was taken and shot.[2]

Prussia, humiliated by the defeat of Jena, but not daring, in spite of pressure from England, to run the risks of a fresh war with Napoleon, was willing enough to put a fresh spoke in his wheel by adopting a middle term between peace and war, such as is reprobated among all civilised nations. Major Schill, leaving Berlin in open day at the head of his regiment of hussars, swept the north of Germany, killing and plundering the French, and calling on the people to revolt. In this way he succeeded in forming a band of more than 600 men, at whose head he had the hardihood to attack, with support from the English fleet, the fortress of Stralsund, defended by the brave General Gratien.[3] There was fighting in the streets, and Major Schill was killed.

[1] The Tyrolese had quite enough cause to rise, without any English instigation. The pledges given for the maintenance of their old customs and liberties were freely violated by the Bavarian Government. As a matter of fact, the Tyrolese made the first advances to England.

[2] At Mantua, February 20, 1810, by special order from Napoleon, though a majority of the court which 'tried' him were in favour of sparing his life.

[3] It seems really to have been in defending himself against the French who were trying to dislodge him from Stralsund, that Schill perished, May 31.

Many young men belonging to the best families of Prussia, who were taken fighting with him, were brought to trial by the Emperor's order, and sent off to Brest, condemned as thieves and assassins to penal servitude for life. The Prussian nation was angry enough at this treatment, but the Government, realising the true character of such acts of brigandage, did not venture to make any remonstrance, and contented itself with disavowing Schill and his troops, whom it would have rewarded had their enterprise brought about the rising of Germany.

The Prince of Brunswick-Oels, who had lost his states under the treaty of Tilsit and taken refuge in England, went to Lusatia, and, raising a band of 2,000 men, carried on a guerilla war against the French and their allies, the Saxons. In Westphalia, Colonel Derneberg, an officer of King Jerome's guard, spread sedition in several districts, and even marched upon Cassel, with the intention of carrying off Jerome. Katt and several other Prussian officers raised bands in different places, as it was afterwards proved, with the tacit consent of the Prussian Government. If these various insurgent bodies, led by able and enterprising chiefs, had combined, the consequences to us might have been very awkward; but they all broke up when the news came of the battle of Eckmühl and the capture of Vienna. The moment had not yet come to unite all the forces of Germany against Napoleon; Russia was then our ally, and her agreement was lacking. She had even furnished us with a contingent of 20,000 men, who were acting, though very slackly, in Galicia. Russia, however, had no scruple at the peace about claiming her share of the Austrian spoils, with which she never again parted.

CHAPTER XLVI

NAPOLEON had now concentrated the bulk of his forces around Vienna. Less fortunate, however, than in 1805, he found the Spitz bridge broken, and could not finish the war nor reach his enemy, without passing the mighty stream of the Danube. At this period of the spring, the melting snow swells the stream till it becomes immense, and each of its branches is equal to a large river. The crossing consequently presented many difficulties, but as the stream flows among a great number of islands, some of which are very spacious, points can be found there on which to support bridges. After inspecting the bank closely, both above and below Vienna, the Emperor observed two spots favourable for the passage. The first by the isle of Schwarzelaken, opposite Nussdorf, half a league above Vienna; the second, the same distance below the town, opposite the village of Kaiserbersdorf, and crossing the great island of Lobau. Napoleon had both bridges set to work upon at once in order to distract the attention of the enemy. The first was entrusted to Lannes, the other to Masséna.

Marshal Lannes ordered General Saint-Hilaire to send 500 men to the island of Schwarzelaken, which is separated from the left bank by a small arm of the river, and almost reaches the end of the Spitz bridge. General Saint-Hilaire composed this force of men from two regiments under two majors, which was likely to interfere with combined action. Thus, on reaching the island these officers, not acting in concert, committed the great mistake of having no reserve in a large house well placed for protecting the landing of more troops. Then dashing on blindly, without organisation, they pursued some detachments of the enemy who were defending the island.

These shortly received reinforcements from the left bank, and though our soldiers repulsed the first attacks with vigour, forming square and fighting with the bayonet, they were overwhelmed by numbers, more than half being killed and all the rest wounded and taken before support could reach them. The Emperor and Marshal Lannes arrived on the river-bank just in time to witness this disaster. They bitterly reproached General Saint-Hilaire, who, though he had much experience of war, had made the mistake of first composing his detachment badly, and then of letting it go before he was in a position to support it promptly by successive reinforcements. It is true he had few boats at his disposal, but plenty more were coming up, for which he might have waited, and not acted precipitately. In this affair the Austrian troops were commanded by a French *émigré*, General Nordmann. He was very soon punished for having borne arms against his country, for he was killed by a cannon-ball at the battle of Wagram.

In despair at having caused the deaths of so many brave men, the Emperor and Marshal Lannes were hastening along the bank in a state of great agitation, when the marshal, catching his foot in a rope, fell into the Danube. Napoleon, who was alone with him at the moment, dashed into the water up to his waist, and had got the marshal out when we ran up to his assistance. This accident did not improve their tempers, already tried by the check which we had received, and which compelled the idea of a passage by the Schwarzelaken island to be given up. Having ascertained our purpose, the enemy had occupied it with several thousand men. Ebersdorf was now the only point at which we could cross the Danube. The village lies on the left bank, and in order to reach it we had to cross four branches of the river; the first being 500 yards in breadth, from which may be judged the immense length of the bridge that we had to throw across. Then comes an island, and then the second branch, the most rapid of all, 320 yards wide. The third stream is not more than 40. After passing these obstacles the huge island of Lobau is reached, which again is separated

from the main land by the fourth branch, 140 yards across. We therefore had over 1,000 yards of water to traverse, and four bridges to build. The advantage of the crossing opposite Ebersdorf was that the Lobau island served as an immense place of arms, from which one could reach the left bank with more security, and further, as it formed a re-entering angle, offered a very advantageous debouchment upon the middle of the plain, which stretches between the villages of Gross-Aspern and Essling. No better configuration could be desired for the passage of an army.

Finding, when he arrived opposite Vienna, that Napoleon was checked by the river, the Archduke Charles hoped to prevent his crossing it by threatening his rear. He attacked our forces at Linz, and at Krems made arrrangements to cross the river with all his army. But his troops were everywhere repulsed, and he confined himself to resisting our passage opposite Ebersdorf. Many obstacles were in the way of our building the bridges; we had to use boats of different shapes and dimensions, and materials lacking the necessary strength; we had no anchors, and had to supply their place with boxes full of cannon-balls. The works were carried on under cover of the plantations, and protected by Masséna's division.

Lannes' division, posted over against Nussdorf, was to make apparent preparations for a crossing, in order to distract the enemy's attention. But this demonstration was merely a feint; and the marshal himself accompanied the Emperor on the 19th, when he went to Ebersdorf to direct the establishment of the bridges. After examining everything most thoroughly, and ascertaining that everything had been procured that was possible under the circumstances, Napoleon caused a brigade of Molitor's division to cross to the island of Lobau in eighty large boats and ten rafts. The breadth of the river and its roughness made this difficult, but once on the island the troops met with no obstacle; the enemy, pre-occupied with the idea that we meant to cross above Vienna, having omitted to guard that point. The construction of the bridges lasted all night, and, the weather being fine, was completed by

noon on the 20th, when all the divisions of Masséna's corps crossed to the island. Probably, such great works have never been completed in so short a time. By four o'clock in the afternoon the fourth branch of the Danube was bridged by Masséna's infantry divisions, commanded by Generals Legrand, Boudet, Carra-Saint-Cyr, and Molitor, followed by the light cavalry divisions under Lasalle and Marulaz, with General Espagne's cuirassiers, 25,000 men in all, debouched from the island, with the intention of occupying the villages of Essling and Aspern. Only a few squadrons of the enemy appeared on the horizon; the bulk of the Austrian army was still at Gerhardsdorf, but was about to march to prevent us from establishing ourselves on the left bank. Marshal Lannes' corps was to leave Nussdorf for Ebersdorf, but, being delayed in its passage through Vienna, it did not come up till late the next day. The infantry of the guard followed.

On the evening of May 20, the Emperor and Marshal Lannes being lodged in the only house which existed on the island, my comrades and I took up our quarters close by, in brilliant moonlight, on beautiful turf. It was a delicious night, and with the carelessness of soldiers, thinking nothing of the morrow's dangers, we chatted gaily, and sang the last new airs—among others, two which were then very popular in the army, being attributed to Queen Hortense. The words were very appropriate to our circumstances; there was:—

'You leave me, dear, to go where glory waits you;
My loving heart accompanies your steps.'

And then again:—

'The gentle radiance of the evening star
Illumined with its beams the tents of France.'

Captain d'Albuquerque was the most joyous of us all, and after charming us with his fine voice, he sent us into fits of laughing by relating the most comical adventures of his adventurous life. Poor fellow! he little thought that the

next day's sun would be his last—as little as we guessed that the plain which lay over against us on the other bank was soon to be watered with the blood of our kind marshal, and with that of almost every one of us.

On the morning of the 21st the Austrian lines showed themselves, and took up their position facing ours in front of Essling and Aspern. Marshal Masséna ought to have loopholed the houses of these villages, and covered the approaches by field-works, but unluckily he had neglected to take this precaution. The Emperor found fault with him, but as the enemy was approaching, and there was no time to repair the omission, Napoleon did his best to supply it by covering the last bridge with a *tête de pont*, which he traced himself. If Marshal Lannes' corps, the imperial guard, and the other expected troops had been present, Napoleon would certainly not have given the Archduke time to deploy, but would have attacked him on the spot. Having, however, only three divisions of infantry and four of cavalry to oppose to the enemy's large force, he was constrained, for the moment, to act on the defensive. To this end he rested his left wing, consisting of three divisions of infantry under Masséna, on the village of Aspern. The right wing, formed by Boudet's division, rested on the Danube, near the great wood lying between the river and the village of Essling, and occupied that village also. Lastly, the three cavalry divisions, and part of the artillery, under the orders of Marshal Bessières, formed the centre, spreading over the space which remained empty between Essling and Aspern. The Emperor compared his position to an entrenched camp, of which Aspern and Essling represented the bastions, united by a curtain formed by the cavalry and the artillery. The two villages, though not entrenched, were capable of a good defence, being built of masonry, surrounded by low banks, which protected them against the inundation of the Danube. The church and churchyard of Aspern could hold out for a long time. Essling had for its citadel a large enclosure and an immense stone house built of hewn stone. We found these points very useful.

Although the troops composing the right and centre did not form any part of Lannes' corps, the Emperor wished in this difficulty to make use of the marshal's talents, and had entrusted the command-in-chief of them to him. He was heard to say to Marshal Bessières, much, as it appeared, to Bessières' annoyance, 'You are under the orders of Marshal Lannes.' I shall relate directly the serious quarrel to which this declaration gave rise, and how, greatly against my will, I got mixed up in it.

About 2 P.M. the Austrian army advanced upon us, and we were very hotly engaged. The cannonade was terrible; the enemy's force was so much superior to ours that they might easily have hurled us into the Danube by piercing the cavalry line which formed our only centre, and if the Emperor had been in the Archduke's place he would certainly have taken that course. But the Austrian commander-in-chief was too methodical to act in this determined way, therefore instead of boldly massing a strong force in the direction of our *tête de pont*, he occupied the whole of the first day in attacking Aspern and Essling, which he carried and lost five or six times after murderous combats. As soon as one of these villages was occupied by the enemy, the Emperor sent up reserves to retake it, and if we were again driven from it, he took it again, though both places were on fire. During this alternation of successes and reverses, the Austrian cavalry several times threatened our centre, but ours repulsed it and returned to its place between the two villages, though terribly cut up by the enemy's artillery. Thus the action continued till ten in the evening, the French remaining masters of Essling and Aspern, while the Austrians, withdrawing their left and centre, did nothing but make some fruitless attacks on Aspern. They brought up, however, strong reinforcements for the morrow's action.

During this first day of the battle, though Marshal Lannes' staff, being always engaged in carrying orders to the most exposed points, had incurred great danger, we had yet no loss to deplore, and we were beginning to congratulate

ourselves when, as the sun went down, the enemy, wishing to cover his retreat by a redoubled fire, sent a hail of projectiles at us. At that moment d'Albuquerque, La Bourdonnaye, and I, standing facing the marshal, were reporting to him upon orders which we had been sent to convey, having our backs consequently towards the enemy's guns. A ball struck poor d'Albuquerque in the loins, flinging him over the head of his horse, and laying him stone dead at the marshal's feet. 'There,' he exclaimed, 'is the end of the poor lad's romance! But he has at any rate died nobly.' A second ball passed between La Bourdonnaye's saddle and the spine of his horse without touching either horse or rider, a really miraculous shot. But the front of the saddle-tree was so violently smashed between La Bourdonnaye's thighs, that the wood and the iron were forced into his flesh, and he suffered for a long time from this extraordinary wound.

I had been between my two comrades, and saw them both fall at the same moment. I went towards the escort to order some troopers to come and carry La Bourdonnaye away, but I had hardly gone a few steps when an aide-de-camp of General Boudet, having come forward to speak to the marshal, had his head taken off by a cannon-ball in the very spot which I had just left. Clearly this place was no longer tenable. We were right in front of one of the enemy's batteries, so the marshal, for all his courage, thought it advisable to move a couple of hundred yards to the right.

The last order which Marshal Lannes had given me to carry was addressed to Marshal Bessières, and gave rise to a brisk altercation between the two marshals, who hated each other cordially. In order to understand the scene which I am about to relate, it is necessary that you should know the reasons of this hatred.

General Bonaparte, when on his way to assume the command of the Army of Italy in 1796, took as his senior aide-de-camp Murat, whom he had just promoted to colonel, and for whom he had a great liking. Having, however, in the first actions noticed the military capacity, zeal,

and courage of Lannes, then commanding the 40th of the line, he granted to that officer an equally large share of his esteem and friendship, thus exciting Murat's jealousy. When the two colonels had become generals of brigade, Bonaparte was accustomed, on critical occasions, to entrust to Murat the direction of the cavalry charges and put Lannes in command of the reserve of the grenadiers. Both did splendidly, and the army had nothing but praise for either. But between these gallant officers there grew up a rivalry which, if the truth must be told, was not at all displeasing to the commander-in-chief, as tending to stimulate their zeal and their desire of distinction. He would extol before Murat the achievements of General Lannes, and enlarge in Lannes' presence on the merits of Murat. The rivalry soon led to altercations, in which Bessières, then merely captain in General Bonaparte's Guides and in high favour with the commander, always took the part of his compatriot[1] Murat; while taking every opportunity, as Lannes was well aware, of depreciating him.

After the Italian campaigns Lannes and Murat accompanied Bonaparte to Egypt. About this time both conceived a wish to marry Caroline Bonaparte, and Bessières found an opportunity to injure Lannes' suit irretrievably. As a member of the administrative council, charged with the distribution of the military fund, he became aware that Lannes had exceeded the allowance for the outfit of his regiment, the consular guard, by 300,000 francs. He revealed this to Murat, who brought it to the ears of the First Consul. Lannes was dismissed from the command of the guard, and allowed a month to make up the deficit, which, without the generous aid of Augereau,[2] he would have found it hard to do. Napoleon afterwards received him back into favour; but meantime Murat had married Caroline Bonaparte. As may be supposed, Lannes never forgave Bessières, and the antipathy was in full vigour when they came in contact at the battle of Essling.

[1] Bessières was born at Preissac, Murat at La Bastide-Fortunière, both in the department of the Lot.

[2] See p. 142.

At the moment of the brisk cannonade which had just killed poor d'Albuquerque, Lannes, observing that the Austrians were making a retrograde movement, thought it a good opening for a cavalry charge. He called me to carry the order to Marshal Bessières, who, as I have said, had just been placed under his command by the Emperor. I was on duty; so the next aide-de-camp in course for service came up. It was de Viry. Marshal Lannes gave him the following order: 'Go and tell Marshal Bessières that I *order* him to *charge home*.' This expression, conveying that the charge must be pushed till the sabres are in the enemy's bodies, obviously is very like a reprimand; as implying that hitherto the cavalry has not acted with sufficient vigour. The expression 'I order,' employed by one marshal to another, was also very rough. Lannes used the two phrases intentionally.

Off went de Viry, fulfilled his instructions, and returned to the marshal, who asked, 'What did you say to Marshal Bessières?' 'I informed him that your Excellency begged him to order a general charge of the cavalry.' Lannes shrugged his shoulders, and cried, 'You are a baby; send another officer!' This time it was Labédoyère. The marshal knew he was of firmer character than de Viry, and gave him the same message, emphasising the expressions 'I order' and 'charge home.' Labédoyère did not see Lannes' intention, and did not like to repeat the words *verbatim* to Bessières; so he too employed a circumlocution. Accordingly when he came back and reported the words he had used, Lannes turned his back on him. At that moment I galloped up to the staff. It was not my turn for duty, but the marshal called me and said, 'Marbot, Marshal Augereau assured me that you were a man I could count on. So far I have found his words justified by your conduct. I should like a further proof. Go and tell Marshal Bessières that I order him to charge home. You understand, sir, *home*.' As he spoke he poked me in the ribs with his finger. I perfectly understood that Lannes wished to mortify Bessières, first by taking a harsh way of reminding him that the Emperor had

put him in a subordinate post to himself, and further by finding fault with his management of the cavalry. I was perturbed at being obliged to transmit offensive expressions to the other marshal. It was easy to foresee that they might have awkward results; but my immediate chief must be obeyed.

So I galloped off to the centre, wishing that one of the shots which were dropping thickly about might bowl over my horse, and give me a good excuse for not accomplishing my disagreeable mission! I approached Marshal Bessières with much respect, and begged to speak with him in private. 'Speak up, sir,' he replied stiffly. So I had to say in presence of his staff and a crowd of superior officers, 'Marshal Lannes directs me to tell your Excellency that he orders you to charge home.' Bessières angrily exclaimed, 'Is that the way to speak to a marshal, sir? *Orders! charge home!* You shall be severely punished for this rudeness.' I answered, 'Marshal, the more offensive the terms I have used seem to your Excellency, the more sure you may be that in using them I only obeyed my orders.' I saluted and returned to Lannes. 'Well, what did you say to Marshal Bessières?' 'That your Excellency ordered him to charge home.' 'Right; here is one aide-de-camp at any rate who understands me.' In spite of this compliment, you may imagine that I was very sorry to have had to deliver such a message. However, the cavalry charge came off; General d'Espagne was killed, but the result was very good. Whereon Lannes said, 'You see that my stern injunction has produced an excellent effect; but for it *M. le Maréchal* Bessières would have fiddled about all day.'

Night came on, and the battle ceased both in the centre and on our right, on which Lannes determined to join the Emperor, who was bivouacking within the works of the *tête de pont*. But hardly had we started, when the marshal hearing brisk firing in Aspern, where Masséna was in command, wished to go and see what was taking place in the village. He bade his staff go on to the Emperor's bivouac, and, taking only myself and an orderly, bade me guide him to Aspern, where I had been several times in the course of

the day. I went in that direction; with the moon and the blaze of Essling and Aspern we had plenty of light. Still, as the frequent paths were apt to be hidden by the tall corn, and I was afraid of losing myself in it, I dismounted in order to find the way better. Soon the marshal dismounted also, and walked by my side chatting about the day's fighting and the chances of that which would take place on the morrow. A quarter of an hour brought us close to Aspern, the approaches to which were lined by the bivouac fires of Masséna's troops. Wishing to speak to him, Marshal Lannes bade me go forward to ascertain his quarters. Before we had gone many steps, I perceived Masséna walking in front of the camp with Marshal Bessières. The wound in my forehead which I had received in Spain prevented me from wearing a busby, and I was the only one among the marshal's aides-de-camp who had a cocked hat. Bessières, recognising me by this, but not yet noticing Marshal Lannes, came towards me, saying, 'Ah! it is you, sir; if what you said recently came from you alone, I will teach you to choose your expressions better when speaking to your superiors; if you were only obeying your marshal, he shall give me satisfaction, and I bid you tell him so.' Then Marshal Lannes, leaping forward like a lion, passed in front of me, and seizing my arm, cried: 'Marbot, I owe you an apology; for though I believed I could be certain of your attachment, I had some doubts remaining as to the manner in which you had transmitted my orders to this gentleman; but I see that I was unfair to you.' Then, addressing Bessières, 'I wonder how you dare to find fault with one of my aides-de-camp. He was the first to mount on the walls at Ratisbon, he crossed the Danube at the risk of almost certain death, he has just been twice wounded in Spain, while there are some so-called soldiers who haven't had a scratch in their lives, and have got their promotion by playing the spy and informer on their comrades. What fault have you to find with this officer?' 'Sir,' said Bessières, 'your aide-de-camp came and told me that you ordered me to charge home; it appears to me that such

expressions are unseemly!' 'They are quite right, sir, and it was I who dictated them; did not the Emperor tell you that you were under my orders?' Bessières replied with hesitation, 'The Emperor warned me that I must comply with your opinion.' 'Know, sir,' cried the marshal, 'that in military matters people do not comply, they obey orders. If the Emperor had thought fit to place me under your command, I should have offered him my resignation. But so long as you are under mine, I shall give you orders and you will obey; otherwise I shall withdraw the command of the troops from you. As for charging home, I gave you the order because you did not do it, and because all the morning you were parading before the enemy without approaching him boldly.' 'But that's an insult,' cried Bessières, angrily; 'you shall give me satisfaction!' 'This very moment if you like!' cried Lannes, laying his hand on his sword.

During this discussion, old Masséna, interposing between the adversaries, sought to calm them, and not succeeding, he took the high tone in his turn. 'I am your senior, gentlemen; you are in my camp, and I shall not permit you to give my troops the scandalous spectacle of seeing two marshals draw on each other, and that in presence of the enemy. I summon you, therefore, in the name of the Emperor, to separate at once.' Then, adopting a gentler manner, he took Marshal Lannes by the arm, and led him to the further end of the bivouac, while Bessières returned to his own. You may suppose how distressed I was by this deplorable scene. Finally, Marshal Lannes, remounting, set off for the Emperor's bivouac where my comrades were already established. On reaching it, he took Napoleon aside, and related what had happened. The Emperor at once sent for Marshal Bessières, whom he received sternly; then they went some distance away, and walked rapidly, the Emperor appearing to be reprimanding him severely. Marshal Bessières looked confused, and must have felt still more so when the Emperor sat down to dinner without inviting him, while he made Marshal Lannes take a seat at his right hand. My comrades and I were as sad this evening as we had been

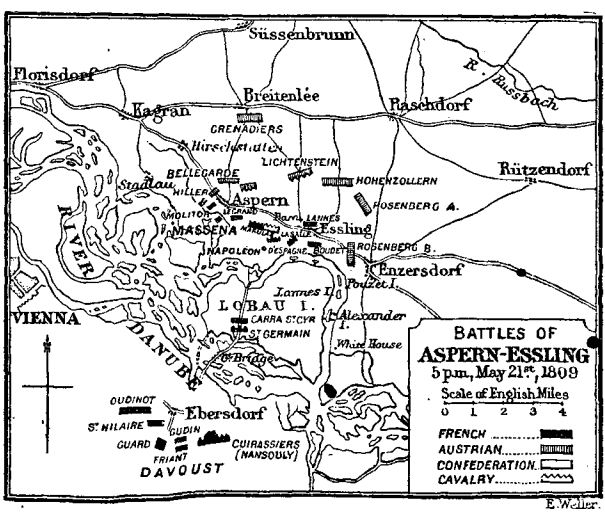
cheerful the night before. We had just seen poor d'Albuquerque killed; we had close beside us La Bourdonnaye horribly wounded, and groaning so as to break our hearts; and we were, besides, agitated with sad presentiments with regard to the result of the battle, of which we had seen only the first part. Moreover, we were on our legs all night, seeing Marshal Lannes' corps across the Danube, followed by the imperial guard. Meanwhile, the river was rising visibly; great trees, borne down by the flood, kept striking the bridges of boats, more than once breaking them. They were, however, promptly repaired, and, in spite of accidents, the troops which I have mentioned crossed the river, and were assembled on the battle-field by the time that the dawn of May 22 appeared, and the roar of cannon announced that the fight was being renewed.

Having at his disposal twice as many troops as on the previous day, the Emperor took steps to attack. Marshal Masséna and three of his infantry divisions remained in Aspern; the fourth, that of General Boudet, was left at Essling, under the command of Marshal Lannes, whose corps occupied the space between the two villages, having as its second line Bessières' cavalry, still under the orders of Lannes. The imperial guard formed the reserve. The Emperor's reprimand to Marshal Bessières had been so severe that, as soon as he saw Lannes, he came to ask him how he wished his troops to be placed. The marshal, wishing to establish his authority, replied, 'As you await my orders, sir, I order you to place them at such a point.' The expression was harsh, but one must remember how Bessières had behaved to Lannes in the days of the Consulate. He appeared hurt, but obeyed in silence.

The Archduke, who might, by a vigorous attack, have pierced our weak line between Essling and Aspern the day before, renewed his efforts against those villages. But, as we had then resisted his whole army, with only Masséna's corps and part of our cavalry, we were all the more able to do so now that we had been joined by the imperial guard, Marshal Lannes' corps, and a division of cuirassiers. The Austrians

were repulsed at all points; one of their columns, consisting of 1,000 men under General Weber, with six guns, was actually cut off and captured in Aspern.

So far the Emperor had been acting on the defensive, while the troops were crossing the river, but now that the numbers whom he had on the battle-field were doubled, and Marshal Davout's corps had assembled at Ebersdorf, and begun to cross, Napoleon judged that the time had come for assuming the offensive, and ordered Marshal Lannes at the head of the infantry divisions of Saint-Hilaire, Tharreau, Claparède, and Demont, followed by two divisions of cuirassiers, to break the enemy's centre. Lannes advanced proudly into the plain; nothing could resist him. In a moment he captured a battalion, five guns, and a flag. At first the Austrians retreated in good order, but as their centre was obliged to extend in proportion as we advanced, it was at last broken through. Their troops fell into such disorder that we could see the officers and sergeants striking their soldiers with sticks, without being able to keep them in the ranks. If our advance had continued a few moments longer, it would have been all up with the Archduke's army.



CHAPTER XLVII

EVERYTHING foretold a complete victory for us. Masséna and General Boudet were making ready to issue from Aspern and Essling, and to fall upon the Austrians, when, to our surprise, an aide-de-camp from the Emperor came up with orders to Marshal Lannes to suspend his attacking movement. Trees and other objects floating in the Danube had caused a new breach in the bridge, and the arrival of Davout's troops and of the ammunition was delayed. After an hour's waiting the passage was repaired, and, though the enemy had profited by the delay to reinforce his centre, we renewed our attack. Again the Austrians were giving ground, when we heard that an immense piece of the great bridge had been carried away, and would take forty-eight hours to replace. The Emperor accordingly ordered Lannes to halt on the ground which he had taken.

This mishap, which hindered us from winning a brilliant victory, came about as follows. An Austrian officer, posted on look-out duty with some companies of *Jägers* in the islands above Aspern, had embarked in a small boat and gone out to the middle of the river to get a distant view of our troops crossing the bridges. Thus he witnessed the first breach caused by the floating trees, and the idea struck him that the same accident might be repeated as fast as we repaired the damages. So he had a number of beams and some fire-boats launched down the stream, destroying some of our pontoons. But seeing that the engineers quickly replaced them, the officer caused a large floating mill to be set on fire and towed out into mid-stream. Borne down upon our principal bridge, it broke away a large part of it. Perceiving instantly that all hope of restoring the passage, and enabling

Davout to reach the field of battle was abandoned for that day; the Emperor ordered Lannes to withdraw his troops by degrees to their former position, between Aspern and Essling, so that, resting on those villages, they might hold their ground against the enemy. The movement was being carried out in perfect order, when the Archduke, who had at first been puzzled by our retreat, heard that the bridge was broken, and saw a chance of driving the French army into the Danube. With this view he sent his cavalry against the most advanced of our divisions, that of Saint-Hilaire. Our battalions repulsed the charge, and the enemy then opened upon them with a heavy artillery fire. Just then I was bearing an order from Lannes to General Saint-Hilaire. Hardly had I reached him when a storm of grape struck his staff, killing several officers and smashing the general's leg. He died under amputation. I was myself struck in the thigh by a grape-shot, which tore out a piece of flesh as large as an egg, but the wound was not dangerous, and I was able to return and report to the marshal. I found him with the Emperor, who, seeing me covered with blood, remarked, 'Your turn comes round pretty often!' Both he and the marshal felt the loss of General Saint-Hilaire keenly.

Seeing the division attacked at all points, the marshal went to take command of it. He withdrew it slowly, often facing towards the enemy, until our right rested on Essling, which was still held by Boudet's division. Though my wound was not yet dressed, I thought I ought to go with the marshal. In the course of the retreat, my friend de Viry had his shoulder smashed by a bullet, and I had some difficulty in getting him brought to the entrenchments.

The position was very critical. Compelled to act on the defensive, the Emperor posted his army in an arc, having the Danube for its chord, our right resting on the river in rear of Essling, our left in rear of Aspern. Under pain of being driven into the river we had to keep up the flight for the rest of the day; it was now 9 A.M., and not till nightfall should we be able to retire to the island of Lobau by the weak

bridge over the small branch. The Archduke, recognising the weakness of our position, repeatedly attacked the two villages and the centre, but, fortunately for us, did not think of forcing our weakest point, between Essling and the Danube, by which a strong column pushed vigorously forward might have reached the *tête de pont* and destroyed us. All along our lines the slaughter was terrible, but absolutely necessary to save the honour of France and the portion of the army which had crossed the Danube.

To check the energy of the enemy's attacks, Marshal Lannes frequently resumed the offensive against their centre, and forced it back, but they soon returned with reinforcements. On one of these occasions, Labédoyère got a grape-shot in his foot, and Watteville a dislocated shoulder, his horse being killed under him by a cannon-ball. Thus of all the staff Sub-lieutenant Le Couteulx and I remained, and I could not leave the marshal alone with that young officer, who, though brave enough, had no experience. Wishing to retain me, he said, 'Go, and get dressed; if you can then sit your horse, come back to me.' I went to the first field-hospital; the crowd of wounded was enormous, and lint had run short. A doctor put into my wound some of the coarse tow which is used as wadding for cannon, and the rough fibres gave me a good deal of pain. Under other circumstances I should have gone to the rear, but now every man had to display all his energy, and I went back to the marshal. I found him very anxious, having just heard that the Austrians had taken half of Aspern from Masséna. That village was taken and re-taken many times. Essling was being vigorously attacked at that very instant, and bravely defended by Boudet's division. So fierce were both sides that they were fighting in the midst of the burning houses, and barricading themselves with the hacked corpses which blocked the streets. Five times the Hungarian grenadiers were driven back, but their sixth attack succeeded. They got possession of the village, all but the great granary, into which General Boudet withdrew, as into a citadel.

While this fighting was going on, the marshal sent me

several times into Essling. The danger was considerable, but in the excitement I even forgot the pain of my wound.

At length, perceiving that, repeating his fault of the day before, he was wasting his forces against our two bastions, Essling and Aspern, and neglecting our centre, where a well-sustained attack with his reserve would bring him to our bridge and secure the destruction of the French army, the Archduke launched large masses of cavalry, supported by heavy columns of infantry, on this point. Marshal Lannes, not surprised by this display of force, gave orders that the Austrians should be allowed to approach within gun-shot range and received them with such a furious fire of musketry and grape that they halted, nor could the stimulating presence of the Archduke induce them to come a single pace nearer. They could perceive behind our line the bearskin caps of the Old Guard, which was advancing in a stately column, with shouldered arms.

Cleverly profiting by the enemy's hesitation, Marshal Lannes caused Bessières to charge them at the head of two divisions of cavalry. Part of the Austrian battalions and squadrons were overthrown, and the Archduke, finding his attack on our centre unsuccessful, thought to profit at least by the advantage which the capture of Essling offered. At that moment, however, the Emperor ordered his aide-de-camp, General Mouton, to retake the village. Hurling himself upon the Hungarian grenadiers, he drove them out, and remained master of Essling, a feat which covered himself and the Young Guard with glory, and earned him later on the title of Count of Lobau.

These successes on our part having slackened the enemy's ardour, the Archduke, whose losses were enormous, abandoned the hope of forcing our position, and for the rest of the day only kept up an ineffectual combat. This terrible thirty hours' battle was drawing to its end. It was high time, for our ammunition was nearly exhausted. Had it not been for the activity with which Davout kept sending it over in small boats from the right bank, it would have failed utterly. As, however, the boats came few and far between, the Emperor

bade us economise, and our fire became mere sharpshooting practice, the enemy at the same time reducing his.

While the two armies were mutually watching each other but not moving, and the commanders in groups in rear of the battalions were discussing the events of the day, Marshal Lannes, weary with riding, had dismounted, and was walking about with Major-General Pouzet. Just then a spent ball struck the general on the head, laying him dead at the marshal's feet. He had been formerly a sergeant in the Champagne Regiment, and at the beginning of the Revolution was at the camp of Le Miral when my father commanded there. At the same time the battalion of volunteers from the Gers, in which Lannes was sub-lieutenant, formed part of the division. The sergeants of the old line regiments having the task of instructing the volunteers, that of Gers fell to the share of Pouzet. Quickly perceiving the young sub-lieutenant's talents, he did not confine himself to teaching him the manual exercise, but gave him such instruction in manœuvres that he became an excellent tactician. Attributing his first promotion to Pouzet's instruction, Lannes was much attached to him, and in proportion as he got on himself he used his interest to advance his friend. His grief, then, at seeing him fall dead was very great.

At that moment we were a little in advance of the tile-works, to the left, near Essling. In his emotion, wishing to get away from the corpse, the marshal went a hundred paces in the direction of Enzersdorf, and seated himself, deep in thought, on the further side of a ditch, from which he could watch the troops. A quarter of an hour later, four soldiers laboriously carrying in a cloak a dead officer whose face could not be seen stopped to rest in front of the marshal. The cloak fell open, and Lannes recognised Pouzet. 'Oh!' he cried, 'is this terrible sight going to follow me everywhere?' Getting up, he went and sat down at the edge of another ditch, his hand over his eyes and his legs crossed. As he sat there, plunged in gloomy meditation, a small three-pound shot, fired from a gun at Enzersdorf, ricochetted, and struck him just where his legs crossed. The knee-pan of one was

smashed, and the back sinews of the other torn. Instantly I rushed towards the marshal, who said, 'I am wounded; it's nothing much; give me your hand to help me up.' He tried to rise, but could not. The infantry regiments in front of us sent some men at once to carry the marshal to an ambulance, but, having neither stretcher nor cloak, we had to take him in our arms, an attitude which caused him horrible pain. Then a sergeant, seeing in the distance the soldiers who were carrying General Pouzet's body, ran and asked them for the cloak in which he was wrapped. We were about to lay the marshal on it, so as to carry him with less pain; but he recognised the cloak, and said to me, 'This is my poor friend's; it is covered with his blood; I will not use it. Drag me along rather how you can.' Not far off I saw a clump of trees; I sent M. le Couteulx and some grenadiers there, and they presently returned with a stretcher covered with boughs. We carried the marshal to the *tête de pont*, where the chief surgeons proceeded to dress his wound, first holding a private consultation, in which they could not agree as to what should be done. Dr. Larrey was in favour of amputating the leg of which the knee-pan was broken; another, whose name I forget, wanted to cut off both; while Dr. Yvan, from whom I heard these details, was against any amputation. This surgeon, who had long known the marshal, asserted that his firmness of character gave some chance of a cure, while an operation performed in such hot weather would inevitably bring him to the grave. Larrey was the senior surgeon of the army, and his opinion prevailed. One of the marshal's legs was amputated. He bore the operation with great courage; it was hardly over when the Emperor came up. The interview was most touching. The Emperor, kneeling beside the stretcher, wept as he embraced the marshal, whose blood soon stained his white kerseymere waistcoast.

Some evil-disposed persons nave written that Marshal Lannes addressed the Emperor reproachfully, and implored him to make war no longer; but as I was at that moment supporting the marshal's shoulders and heard everything that

he said, I can assert that this was not the case.[1] On the contrary, the marshal felt the proofs of the Emperor's concern very deeply, and when the latter was obliged to go away to give the orders required for the safety of the army, and said, 'You will live, my friend, you will live,' the marshal replied, pressing his hand, 'I trust I may, if I can still be of use to France and to your Majesty.'

In spite of his cruel sufferings the marshal did not forget the position of his troops, but every moment asked for news of them. He learnt with pleasure that as the enemy did not venture to pursue they were profiting by nightfall to return to the island of Lobau. His anxiety extended to his aides-de-camp who had been wounded near him; he asked how they were going on, and when he knew that I had been dressed with coarse tow, he asked Dr. Larrey to examine my wound. I should have liked to carry the marshal to Ebersdorf, on the right bank, but the broken bridge prevented this, and we did not dare to put him on board of a frail boat. He was therefore compelled to pass the night on the island, where, for want of a mattress, I borrowed a dozen cavalry cloaks to make him a bed. We were short of everything, and had not even good water to give the marshal, who was parched with thirst. We offered him Danube water, but the flood had made this so muddy that he could not drink it, and said, resignedly, 'We are like sailors who die of thirst with water all round them.' My desire to soothe his sufferings led me to devise a new kind of filter. One of the marshal's valets, who had remained on the island, had with him a small portmanteau containing linen. I took one of the marshal's shirts of fine material; we tied all the openings with string except one, and, plunging into the Danube the kind of bag thus made, we drew it out full, and then hung it over a large can, so that the water filtering through the linen was cleared of nearly all the earthy particles. The poor marshal, who had followed my operations with eager eyes, was at last able to get a draught, which, if not perfect, was at least fresh and clear, and was very grateful for my

[1] General Pelet also contradicts the story.

invention. The care which I was bestowing on my illustrious patient could not avert my fears for the fate which might befall him if the Austrians were to cross the small arm of the river and attack us on the island. What could I then do for him? I thought for a moment that my fears were going to be realised, for a battery near Enzersdorf sent several shots at us; but the fire did not last long.

In the Archduke's position two courses were open to him: either to make a fierce attack upon the French divisions which remained on the field of battle, or, if this seemed too bold a move, he might without risk to his troops place his artillery on the bank of the small arm from Enzersdorf to Aspern, and by bombarding the island annihilate the 40,000 French who were crowded on it. Happily for us, the enemy's commander-in-chief took neither of these courses; and Masséna, to whom Napoleon had entrusted the command of so much of the army as was still on the left bank, was able during the night to evacuate the villages of Aspern and Essling unmolested, and bring his wounded, all his troops, and all his artillery over to the island. The bridge across the small arm was taken up, and by daybreak on the 23rd all our regiments who had been engaged were safe on the island; nor during the forty-five days which Masséna's occupation of it lasted did the enemy fire another shot in that direction.

A boat of some size was sent by the Emperor on the 23rd to bring Marshal Lannes to the right bank. I put him and our wounded comrades into it, and, when we reached Ebersdorf, sent the latter to Vienna in the charge of M. le Couteulx, remaining myself alone with the marshal. He was taken to one of the best houses in Ebersdorf, and I sent for all his people to come and join him there.

Meanwhile our troops massed on the island of Lobau, short of food and ammunition, reduced to live on horseflesh, and cut off from the right bank by the great breadth of the river, were in a most critical position. It was feared that the Archduke's inaction was feigned, and it was expected that at any moment he might ascend the Danube to a point

above Vienna, and, crossing the river, attack us in rear by the right bank, at the same time raising the capital against us. In that case, Marshal Davout's corps, which was guarding Vienna and Ebersdorf, would certainly have made a stout resistance. But could it have beaten the whole of the enemy's army? And, meanwhile, what would have become of the troops shut up on the island?

The Emperor profited cleverly by the time which the Austrians left him, and never was his prodigious activity better employed. Aided by the indefatigable Davout and his divisions, he did on the 23rd alone more than another general could have got done in a week. A well-organised service of boats brought provisions and ammunition to the island; the wounded were all got away to Vienna; hospitals were established; materials in great quantity collected to repair the bridges, build fresh ones, and protect them by a stockade; a hundred guns of the largest calibre, captured in Vienna, were taken to Ebersdorf. By the 24th, communication with the island was re-established, and the Emperor marched Lannes' division, the guard, and all the cavalry on to the right bank, leaving only Masséna's corps to fortify the island, and put in battery the big guns which had been brought up. This point being secured, the Emperor ordered Bernadotte's army corps, and the various divisions of the Germanic Confederation to come on to Vienna, which would enable him to repulse the Archduke in the event of his venturing across the river to attack us. A few days later we received a powerful reinforcement. A French army under Eugène Beauharnais, coming from Italy, took up its position on our right. I have not yet mentioned this army. At the beginning of the campaign it had experienced a check at Sacile; but a renewed attack on the part of the French resulted in the defeat of the enemy, who were driven across the Alps. The Archduke John had been thrown back across the Danube into Hungary, which opened the communications between the Viceroy and the Grand Army, of which his troops henceforward formed the right wing, posted opposite Pressburg.

CHAPTER XLVIII

I HAVE promised not to weary you with details of strategy, but as the battle of Essling and the unforeseen events which hindered us from winning a brilliant victory have been widely discussed, I think I ought to make some remarks upon the causes which led to that result, all the more so that they have been misdescribed by a Frenchman, who has imputed to the Emperor mistakes which he did not commit. General Rogniart, in his work 'Considerations on the Art of War' asserts that at Essling Napoleon fell thoughtlessly into a trap which the Archduke set for him when he ordered the centre of his army to retire and draw the French forward while he was having the bridges broken, their destruction having been already arranged. Not only is this assertion contrary to the truth, but, as I think I showed in my criticism addressed to General Rogniart in 1820, it is absurd. As a matter of fact if the Archduke knew that he had under his hand the means of destroying the bridges, why did he not have them broken on the evening of the 21st, when not more than 25,000 French troops had crossed to the left bank, whom with the 125,000 at his disposal, he could make sure of destroying or capturing? Would not this have been better than leaving the passage of the river open to Napoleon all night, thus enabling him to double the force which he could oppose to the enemy? If, again, he had arranged the destruction of the bridges, why did he during the afternoon of the 21st lose four or five thousand men in attacking the villages of Essling and Aspern? It would have been much wiser to wait till Masséna's corps, having its retreat cut off, should be obliged to capitulate. Why, finally, did he on the morning of the 22nd renew his furious attacks upon Essling and

Aspern instead of waiting till the bridges were broken? Clearly, because he did not know that it was in his power to destroy them. It was only chance and the flooded state of the river which brought down upon the pontoons the floating trees which caused the first partial breaches, while later on the quick wit of an Austrian officer arranged for the destruction of the great bridge by launching into the current boats laden with burning wood, and lastly, a huge floating mill, which carried away nearly the whole bridge. But nothing had been arranged beforehand, and this was admitted to us afterwards by several of the enemy's generals, whom we saw on the occasion of the armistice at Znaym.

If any doubt remained on the subject it would be entirely destroyed by the following irresistible argument. Of all the military decorations in the Austrian Empire, the most difficult to obtain was that of Maria Theresa, for it was only granted to an officer who could show that he had done more than his duty. He had to ask for the decoration himself, and if he failed he was for ever debarred from demanding it again. Now, in spite of the strictness of this regulation, the officer of the Austrian Jägers obtained the Cross of Maria Theresa, which shows undoubtedly that he had acted on an inspiration of his own, and not by the Archduke's orders. This reasoning, which I have developed in my critical remarks on General Rogniart's work, was especially approved by Napoleon when he read my book and Rogniart's at St. Helena. It was doubtless to punish that general for the partiality shown to our enemies that the Emperor, when leaving me a legacy of 100,000 francs, added in his will, 'I bid Colonel Marbot continue to write in defence of the glories of the French armies, and to the confusion of calumniators and apostates.'

As soon as the troops had effected their retreat into the island of Lobau, and on to the right bank of the Danube, the Emperor took up his quarters at Ebersdorf in order to survey the arrangements for a fresh crossing. Not one bridge, but three, were to be constructed, all having a strong stockade of piles up stream from them to withstand any floating objects

which the enemy might launch at them. The care which the Emperor bestowed on these important works did not prevent him from coming twice a day to visit Marshal Lannes. For the first four days after his wound the marshal went on as well as possible; he preserved perfect equanimity, and conversed very calmly. So far was he from renouncing the service of his country, as some writers have stated, that he made plans for the future. Learning that Mesler, the celebrated Viennese mechanician, had made for the Austrian General, Count Palfy, an artificial leg with which he could walk and ride as well as ever, the marshal asked me to write to that artist, asking him to come and measure him for a leg. But the oppressive heat which we had experienced for some time became more intense, with disastrous results to the wounded man. He was attacked by high fever, accompanied with terrible delirium. The critical situation in which he had left the army was always on his mind, and he fancied himself still on the battle-field. He would call his aides-de camp in a loud voice, bidding one tell the cuirassiers to charge, another to bring the artillery to such and such a point, and so on. In vain did Dr. Yvan and I try to soothe him; he did not understand us. His excitement kept increasing; he no longer recognised even the Emperor. This condition lasted several days without his getting a moment's sleep or resting from his imaginary combats. At length, in the night between the 29th and 30th, he left off giving his orders; a great weakness succeeded the delirium; he recovered all his mental faculties, recognised me, pressed my hand, spoke of his wife, his five children, his father, and, as I was very near his pillow, he rested his head on my shoulder, appeared to be falling asleep, and passed away with a sigh.[1] It was daybreak on May 30. A few moments later the Emperor arrived for his morning visit. I thought it my duty to meet him and let him know of the sad event, caution-

[1] It will be observed that Marbot's report of the last days and death of Marshal Lannes differs materially from the sensational account given by Sir Walter Scott, mainly, it would appear, on the authority of Napoleon himself (as reported by Las Cases) and Savary.

him not to enter the infected atmosphere of the room. t Napoleon, putting me aside, advanced to the marshal's y, which he embraced, bathing it with tears, and saying eatedly, 'What a loss for France and for me!' Berthier d in vain to draw him away from the sad sight; he re- ined for more than an hour, and only yielded when thier pointed out that General Bertrand and the engineer ers were waiting to execute an important piece of work, which he had himself fixed the time. As he went away expressed his satisfaction with the unremitting care which ad taken of the marshal, and bade me have the body em- ned, and everything got ready for its transport to France. My grief, already very keen, was increased by the essity of attending the operation in order to draw up a ort of it, and of superintending the removal of the body. vas a sad day for me, and I reflected much on the destiny his man, who, gifted only with a quick intelligence and a ntless courage, had raised himself by merit from the st to the highest rank of society, and now, in full enjoy- of his honours and vast wealth, had just ended his r in a foreign land, far from his family, in the arms of but his aide-de-camp. Both physical and moral shocks mpaired my health. My wound, a slight one at first, easy to cure if I could have had a few days' rest of mind body, had become terribly inflamed during these ten of anxiety and fatigue; for no one, not even his valets, ndered me any efficient help in tending the marshal. of them, a kind of dandy, had gone off the first day, the plea that the stench of the wounds made him ill. other was more zealous, but really fell ill from this , and I was obliged to send for a hospital man, who was lling as possible, but whose unfamiliar face and dress d to displease the marshal, so that I had to give him hing. This day and night watching made my wound ; my thigh was much swollen, and I could hardly stand, I determined at length to go to Vienna and get proper ent. In the Archduke Albert's palace I found all my ed comrades. The Emperor had not lost sight of us,

for he instructed the chief court surgeon, who lodged Schönbrunn, to look after Marshal Lannes' aides-de-camp, a this good Dr. Franck came to see us twice daily. examining my wound he thought it in a very bad state, a prescribed entire rest. But in spite of his advice I oft walked through the passages to see my friend de Viry, w was kept in bed by a much worse wound than mine. Inde I soon had the grief of losing this excellent comrade, to infinite regret; and as I was the only aide-de-camp who kn his father, the duty of announcing to him the fatal ne fell to me. The poor old man, broken-hearted, survived son but a short time.

While unable to move I read much, and wrote down most important facts of the recent campaign, together w some anecdotes which I had heard about it. Here is one the most interesting. Two years before the establishment the Empire, there existed no rank in French regime intermediate between that of colonel and that of maj Bonaparte, then First Consul, wishing to fill this gap, w had been caused by a decree of the Convention, consulted Council, and it was recognised to be necessary that s rank should be created, with functions equivalent to tha the old lieutenant-colonels. The next point was to settle title, and Bonaparte was decided against the proposa Berthier and some councillors that the former name sh be restored. He pointed out that under the old system colonels being great noblemen who passed their life at and seldom appeared with their regiments, the administra and instruction of these had to be entrusted to officers a as their substitutes, to whom it was quite fit and prop give the title of lieutenant-colonel, since they were the commanders of the regiments of which the colonels merely the titular chiefs. But now that things had cha and the colonels were the real commanders of their cor would not do to create a rivalry between them and officers under consideration. If, however, the na lieutenant-colonel were given to them, they would be br

[1] *Chef de bataillon*, or *d'escadron*.

too near their chiefs, because their juniors would for brevity address them as 'Colonel'; nor was it seemly that when a soldier said he was going to the colonel he should have to be asked, 'To which?' The First Consul accordingly proposed to give the second officer in a regiment the title of *major*. His opinion prevailed, and the rank of lieutenant-colonel was restored, but not the name. This looks like a distinction without a difference; but it is not so, as the following story shows.

On the first day of the battle of Essling the Austrians had captured the village of that name, and the French regiment which had been posted there was retiring in some disorder before a much superior force, when, being sent to that point by Marshal Lannes, I learnt that the colonel had just been killed. The officers and men, resolved to avenge him and retake Essling, had, under the command of the *major*, promptly re-formed their ranks, still under fire, at no great distance from the houses. I hastened to tell the marshal the state of affairs; but when I said in a low voice, 'The colonel is dead,' Napoleon, who was close by, frowned, uttering a 'Hush!' which made me silent; and though unable to explain to myself how he proposed to improve the occasion, I could see that for the moment he did not wish to know that the colonel was killed.

The Emperor, who has been accused of lacking physical courage, galloped off, in spite of the bullets which were whistling round us, reached the centre of the regiment, and asked where the colonel was. No one replied, till Napoleon, having repeated his question, several soldiers answered, 'He has just been killed.' 'I did not ask if he was dead, but where he is.' Then a timid voice announced that he had been left in the village. 'What, soldiers!' said Napoleon. 'You have left your colonel's body in the hands of the enemy? Know that a brave regiment should always be able to show its eagle and its colonel, dead or living. You have left your colonel in that village; go and find him.' The *major*, catching Napoleon's thought, cried, 'Yes, we are dishonoured if we don't bring back our colonel!' and off he

went at the double. The regiment followed, with a shout of, 'Long live the Emperor!' exterminated some hundred Austrians, remained master of the position, and got back the body of its colonel, which a grenadier company brought and laid down at the Emperor's feet. As you quite understand, the Emperor cared nothing about having the poor officer's body, but he wished to attain the double object of re-taking the village, and impressing upon the troops that the colonel is a second flag, which a good regiment should never abandon. This conviction in moments of difficulty exalts the courage of the men and leads them to fight obstinately around their chief, dead or living. Then, turning to Prince Berthier, the Emperor reminded him of the discussion in the council, adding, 'If when I asked for the colonel there had been a lieutenant-colonel instead of the *major*, they would have said, "Here he is," and the effect which I wished to produce would have been less impressive, for in the soldier's eyes lieutenant-colonel and colonel are pretty nearly synonymous titles.' Then the Emperor sent word to the *major*, who had just taken his regiment along so bravely, that he promoted him to colonel.

From what I have just told you you may judge the magic power which Napoleon exercised over his troops, since his presence and a few words from him were enough to send them into any danger; and you can also see with what readiness he could turn to advantage any incident of the battle-field. This episode seemed to me all the more worth recording, since the title of lieutenant-colonel was mistakenly revived under the Restoration.

Here is another anecdote, the chief interest of which is that it gave occasion to a very sensible remark on the part of Lannes. While the infantry of our corps was crossing the bridges and the cavalry was awaiting its turn, a major of the 7th Chasseurs, named M. Hulot d'Hozery, now a general, [we saw him in 1814 on the staff of the Emperor Alexander, when the foreign armies entered Paris], being a very brave man, and urged by curiosity to find out what was taking place on the field of battle, left his regiment at Ebersdorf,

and crossed the river in a boat. On the other side he mounted a horse, and came caracoling as an amateur about our staff near Essling, and at that very moment a cannon-ball took off his arm. As soon as he had been taken to the ambulance for amputation, Marshal Lannes said to us, 'Remember, gentlemen, that in war swagger is always out of place, and that true courage consists in facing the dangers to which one is exposed at one's post, and not in going and parading in the middle of a fight otherwise than at the summons of duty.'

I think I should now give a more complete biography of Marshal Lannes. He was born in 1769 at Lectoure, a little town in Gascony. His father was a mere working dyer, with three sons and one daughter. Lectoure was then a bishop's see, and a certain vicar-general, observing the intelligence and good conduct of the dyer's eldest son, placed him in the seminary, where he took orders, and in course of time became a vicar-general himself. He was a worthy man, and set himself to teach his younger brothers, the second of whom, the future marshal, profited by his lessons so far as he could in the intervals of assisting his father in the work of his trade. When the Revolution broke out, his education was limited to reading, writing, and arithmetic. The youngest brother had not much talent, and, after trying to help him in a military career, the Marshal advised him to quit the service, got him married well for his province, and established him in his native town. The girl, who, when her second brother became general, was still a child, was sent to a good school by him, afterwards dowered by him, and well married.

Lannes was of middle height, but very well built; his countenance pleasant and expressive; his eyes small, but indicating a keen wit; his disposition very kind, but passionate, until he succeeded in overcoming it; his ambition boundless, his activity extraordinary, and his courage undaunted. After passing his youth as a dyer's apprentice he

saw the military career open before him, and advanced in it with giant steps. Carried away by the enthusiasm which in 1791 had decided most men of his age to fly to the defence of their country unjustly attacked, he enrolled himself in the volunteers of the Gers, and served as a grenadier until his comrades were led by his good behaviour, his zeal, and his quick wit to nominate him sub-lieutenant. From that moment he gave himself up to unremitting study, and even when he was marshal he passed part of his nights in work, so that he became a very fairly educated man. He saw his first service under my father at the camp of Le Miral, and afterwards in the Army of the Eastern Pyrenees, where his intrepidity and uncommon intelligence quickly raised him to the rank of major, which he held at the time when my father's division passed under the command of General Augereau. After a bloody engagement, in which Lannes had covered himself with glory, Augereau got him made colonel. Having been wounded in this affair, Lannes was obliged to pass some months at Perpignan, where he was quartered with a rich banker, M. Méric. Winning the esteem of all the family by his pleasant manners, the young officer married Mlle. Méric—a much better match than at that time he could have hoped for.

Peace having been concluded between France and Spain in 1795, Lannes went with Augereau's division to Italy, and was placed as supernumerary with the 4th half-brigade of the line, which, in the absence of its regular chief, was really commanded by him at the time when Bonaparte came to take command of the army. He quickly recognised Lannes' merit, so when a decree of the Directory put all the supernumerary officers on half-pay, Bonaparte took upon himself to keep him in Italy, where, though not officially belonging to the army, he was twice wounded in the campaigns of 1796 and 1797. But for the perspicacity of the commander-in-chief, Lannes would have been removed from the service, and have buried his military talents in the office of his father-in-law, and France would have had one great captain the less. When Bonaparte led an army into Egypt he took Lannes

with him. He had now become major-general, and consequently was officially restored to the active list.

The new general distinguished himself everywhere, and was so seriously wounded at the assault of Acre that his troops thought him dead. I have told you how his life was saved by a captain of grenadiers, who, at the risk of his own life, dragged him to the end of the trenches. In this affair Lannes got a bullet through his neck, and ever afterwards carried his head bent towards his left shoulder, and had a certain discomfort in his larynx. He had scarcely recovered from this wound when he was overtaken by a great sorrow. He learnt that his wife, whom he had not seen for two years, had just been delivered of a boy. A law suit ensued, and he obtained a divorce.

Lannes left Egypt with Napoleon, and followed him to Paris. After the 18th of Brumaire he went with him to Saint-Cloud. He distinguished himself in the campaign of Marengo, and saved the army at the action of Montebello, where a great part of our army engaged in the gorges of the Alps would have been unable to emerge into the plain if Lannes' courage and masterly manœuvres had not got the enemy out of the way. His conduct on this occasion earned him later on the title of Duke of Montebello. It was on his return from this campaign that Lannes conceived a hope of marrying Caroline Bonaparte. I have told you how the intrigues of Bessières swayed the balance in favour of Murat. Lannes was then appointed ambassador at Lisbon, and married Mlle. Guéhéneuc, who brought him a handsome dowry, which, added to a fortunate windfall, put his affairs on a satisfactory footing. By a regulation of old standing, a French ambassador on his first arrival at Lisbon was entitled to pass in free of duty all goods on board the vessel which brought him. General Lannes, in pursuance of the usual practice, ceded this right to a commercial firm for 300,000 francs. Some time afterwards, on the birth of a boy—who was, in later days Minister of Marine under Louis Philippe [1]—the Prince

[1] Napoléon Auguste Lannes, Duke of Montebello, born 1801, was ambassador at Naples, Minister (for a few weeks) of Foreign Affairs, and

Regent of Portugal asked to be godfather. On the christening-day, in the course of a visit to the rooms of the palace in which Brazilian curiosities were kept, he took Lannes to a room where were boxes full of precious stones, and, opening one, he took out three double handfuls of uncut diamonds, and put them into the general's hat, with the words, 'The first for my godson, the second for the ambassadress his mother, and the third for the ambassador.' From this time Lannes, from whom I had the story, was really a wealthy man.

Nor did the favour of fortune stop there. When on ascending the throne in 1804, the First Consul created the dignity of Marshal of France, Lannes naturally was among the first to receive it, with the title of Duke of Montebello. At the Camp of Boulogne he commanded the 5th corps of the Grand Army, and led it the next year into Austria. At Austerlitz he specially distinguished himself, being in command of the left wing. So, too, in the following year, at Saalfeld, Jena, Pultusk, and Friedland. In 1808 and 1809, in Spain, he assisted the Emperor bravely at Burgos, won the battle of Tudela by himself, and captured Saragossa. Then, without resting, he hastened back to Germany. His exploits there I have just narrated, at Eckmühl, Ratisbon, and finally at Essling, where this modern Bayard closed his glorious career.

That you may better appreciate his character, I may relate an incident which shows what pains he took with himself. In ordinary intercourse he was calm and gentle; but on the battle-field he would work himself up into a fury the moment his orders were not well carried out. Now it happened during the battle of Burgos that at the decisive moment, a captain of artillery, having misunderstood a manœuvre which had been enjoined, took his battery in exactly the wrong direction. The marshal, seeing this, galloped off, and in his wrath gave the officer a severe reprimand in the Emperor's presence. As he went away he heard Napoleon say something,

later of Marine under Louis Philippe, and ambassador at St. Petersburg, 1858-1864. He died 1874.

of which he only caught the first words, 'That fellow Lannes.' He returned pensive, and, taking me aside at the first possible moment, required me by his confidence in me, and my affection for him, to tell him the whole of the Emperor's remark. I replied frankly: 'His Majesty said, "That fellow Lannes has all the qualities which go to make a great captain, but he never will be one, because he cannot control his temper, and gets in a rage even with subalterns, and an army-leader can have no greater fault."' The marshal's heart was so set on being a great captain that he resolved to acquire the one qualification which, in the opinion of so good a judge as the Emperor, he lacked; and from that moment I never again saw him out of temper even when, as often happened, especially at Saragossa, his orders were ill-performed. When he perceived a serious fault, the first impulse of his fiery nature towards an outbreak was in an instant checked by his firm will. He would turn pale, and his hands would clench, but he made his remarks as calmly as a phlegmatic man could do, as the following instance may show. Anyone with the least experience of war knows that when soldiers want to clean their muskets, instead of drawing the charges with the proper screw, they have the bad and dangerous habit of letting them off in the air. In spite of all prohibition, it happened, during the siege of Saragossa, that some infantry men were emptying their muskets in this fashion at a moment when the marshal was passing near their camp. One of the bullets, striking the bridle of his horse, cut the reins close to his hand. The soldier was arrested for breach of the regulations; but the marshal, checking his impulse to speak sharply, only said, 'See what you lay yourself open to, and think how sorry you would be if you had killed me,' and had the man set free. It requires strength of mind to master one's character in this way.

As I am writing the history of my life, I have to be constantly coming back to personal details. I may, therefore, remind you that after the death of Marshal Lannes I had gone to Vienna to get my wound attended to. I lay on my bed deep in sad meditations; for not only did I regret for his

own sake the marshal who had been so kind to me, but I could not disguise from myself that the loss of such a supporter changed my position vastly. The Emperor had indeed, told me at Mölk that he appointed me major, and both he and Berthier addressed me as such; but, as in the bustle of the war, no commissions had been drawn out, I was actually still only a captain. My fears for my future were terminated by a piece of good luck. My comrade, La Bourdonnaye, far more severely wounded than I, lay in the next room to mine, and we often chatted through the open door. M. Mounier, the Emperor's secretary, afterwards peer of France, often came to see La Bourdonnaye, and I made his acquaintance. Having often heard my performances and my wounds spoken of at headquarters, and seeing me with a fresh mark of the enemy's fire, he asked what reward I had got. 'None,' said I. 'It can only be by an oversight,' replied he, 'for I am sure I saw your name for one of the commissions lying in the Emperor's portfolio.' Next day I learnt from him that he had placed the commission under the Emperor's eyes, and that the Emperor had written on the margin, 'This officer shall enter the mounted chasseurs of my guard as major'; thus granting me a great and unprecedented favour, for the officers of the guard had army rank superior to that which they held in the corps. In thus admitting me as major, Napoleon raised me two steps at once, and gave me the rank of *major*, or lieutenant-colonel in the line, which was magnificent. I was not, however, dazzled by this advantage, although, as the guard did garrison duty in Paris, I should be able to see more of my mother; but Marshal Bessières was general in command of the guard, and not only did he give a bad reception to officers whom he had not recommended himself, but I feared his ill-will on account of the incident at Essling.

I was in a painful state of uncertainty when Prince Eugène, Viceroy of Italy, arrived at Vienna, and took up his quarters in the Archduke Albert's palace. One day Masséna came to visit him, and, wishing to show kindness to Marshal Lannes' aides-de-camp, came up to our rooms and stayed some

time with me, as he had known me at the time of the siege of Genoa. I told him my difficulty, and he replied, 'No doubt it would be a great advantage to you to enter the guard, but you would expose yourself to Marshal Bessières' vengeance. Come and be my aide-de-camp, and you shall be received like a child of my family, as the son of a good general who died when fighting under me, and I will take care of your promotion.' Enticed by these promises, I accepted; Masséna went off at once to the Emperor, who finally agreed to his request, and sent me on June 18 my commission as major to be aide-de-camp to Masséna.

Delighted though I was at being at length a field-officer, it was not long before I was sorry for having accepted Masséna's offer. An hour after my appointment as aide-de-camp came Marshal Bessières bringing with his own hands my nomination to the guard; he assured me that he would have much pleasure in receiving me in the corps, as he knew that in bearing the order to him on the field of Essling I was only obeying the instructions of Marshal Lannes. I was deeply grateful for this kind and straightforward action, and much regretted that I had been so prompt in engaging myself to Masséna; but it was too late to go back on my decision. I feared at the time that my promotion would suffer, but luckily it was not so, for M. Mounier, who took my place in the guard, was still only major when I became colonel. It is true that he passed the next two years in Paris, while I was in the thick of the fire and got two more wounds.

Napoleon rewarded Marshal Lannes' staff plentifully. Among others, Saint-Mars became colonel of the 3rd Chasseurs, and Labédoyère aide-de-camp to Prince Eugène. As for me, as soon as I could get to Schönbrunn to thank the Emperor for my promotion, his Majesty did me the honour of saying, 'I should have liked to have you in my guard; however, as Marshal Masséna wants you for his aide-de-camp, and that suits you, I have no objection; but in order to show in a special way how pleased I am with you, I appoint you knight of the Empire, with an annuity of 2,000 francs.' If I had

dared, I should have begged the Emperor to return to his first purpose, and admit me into his guard; but how could I tell him the reason why I had originally declined? That being impossible, I confined myself to thanking him, but it was with a sore heart. However, having to resign myself to the position into which my own hot-headedness had brought me, I put aside useless regrets, and took all the more care of my wound, so that I might be fit to accompany my new marshal in the fighting which was sure to follow our next passage of the Danube.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME

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